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[PRICE ONE PENNY.]



[CUT OUT.]

ROBERT RUSHTON'S DESTINY.

CHAPTER I.

He that is proud eats up himself; pride is his own glass, his own trumpet, his own chronicle.
Troilus and Cressida.

THE main school-room in the Millbury Academy was lighted up, and the various desks were occupied by boys and girls of different ages from ten to eighteen, all busily writing under the general direction of Professor George W. Granville, instructor in plain and ornamental penmanship.

Professor Granville, as he styled himself, was a travelling teacher, and generally had large attendances at the evening schools which he opened at different places. He was really a very good penman, and in a course of twelve lessons, for which he charged the very moderate price of five shillings—not, of course, including stationery—he contrived to impart considerable instruction, and such pupils as chose to learn were likely to profit by his tuition. His course in Millbury had been unusually successful. There were a hundred pupils on his list, and there had been no disturbance during the course of lessons.

At nine precisely Professor Granville struck a small bell, and said, in a metallic voice:

"You will now stop writing."

There was a little confusion as the books were closed and the pens were wiped.

"Ladies and gentlemen," said the professor, placing one arm under his coat-tails and extending the other in an oratorical attitude, "this evening completes the course of lessons which I have had the honour and pleasure of giving you. I have endeavoured to impart to you an easy and graceful style of penmanship, such as may be a recommendation to you in after life. It gives me pleasure to state that many of you have made great proficiency, and equalled my highest expectations. There are others, perhaps, who have not been fully sensible of the privileges which they enjoyed. I would say to you all that perfection is not yet attained. You will need practice to reap the full benefit of my instructions.

Should my life be spared I shall hope next winter to give another course of writing lessons in this place, and I hope I may then have the pleasure of meeting you again as pupils. Let me say in conclusion that I thank you for your patronage and for your good behaviour during this course of lessons, and at the same time bid you good-bye."

With these closing words Professor Granville made a low bow, and placed his hand on his heart, as he had done probably fifty times before, on delivering the same speech, which was the stereotyped form in which he closed his evening schools.

There was a thumping of feet, mingled with a clapping of hands, as the professor closed his speech; and a moment later a boy of sixteen, occupying one of the front seats, rose, and, advancing with easy self-possession, drew from his pocket a gold pencil-case, containing also a pen, and spoke as follows:

"Professor Granville, the members of your writing class, desirous of testifying their appreciation of your services as teacher, have contributed to buy this gold pencil case, which on their behalf I have great pleasure in presenting to you. Will you receive with it our best wishes for your continued success as a teacher of penmanship?"

With these words he handed the pencil to the professor and returned to his seat.

The applause that ensued was perfectly terrific, causing the dust to rise from the floor where it had lain undisturbed till the violent attack of two hundred feet raised it in clouds, through which the figure of the professor was still visible with his right arm again extended.

"Ladies and gentlemen," he commenced, "I cannot give fitting utterance to the emotions that fill my heart at this most unexpected tribute of regard and mark of appreciation of my humble services. Believe me I shall always cherish it as a most valued possession, and the sight of it will recall the pleasant and I hope profitable hours which we have passed together this winter. To you in particular, Mr. Rushton, I express my thanks for the touching and

eloquent manner in which you have made the presentation, and, in parting with you all, I echo your own good wishes, and shall hope that you may be favoured with an abundant measure of health and prosperity."

This speech was also vociferously applauded. It was generally considered impromptu, but was in truth as stereotyped as the other.

Professor Granville had on previous occasions been the recipient of similar testimonials, and he had found it convenient to have a set form of acknowledgment.

He was wise in this, for it is a hard thing on the spur of the moment suitably to offer thanks for an unexpected gift.

"The professor made a fine speech," said more than one after the exercises were over.

"So did Bob Rushton," said Edward Kent.

"I didn't see anything extraordinary in what he said," sneered Halbert Davis. "It seemed to me very commonplace."

"Perhaps you could do better yourself, Halbert," said Kent.

"Probably I could," said Halbert, haughtily.

"Why didn't you volunteer, then?"

"I didn't care to have anything to do with it," returned Halbert, scornfully.

"That's lucky," remarked Edward, "as there was no chance of your getting appointed."

"Do you mean to insult me?" demanded Halbert, angrily.

"No, I was only telling the truth."

Halbert turned away, too disgusted to make any reply.

He was a boy of sixteen, of slender form and sallow complexion, dressed with more pretension than taste. Probably there was no boy present whose suit was of such fine material as his.

But something more than good clothes is needed to give a prepossessing appearance, and Halbert's mean and insignificant features were far from rendering him attractive.

However, self-deception is very common, and des-

pite the testimony of his glass Halbert considered himself a young man of distinguished appearance, and was utterly blind to his personal defects.

What contributed to feed his vanity was his position as the son of the richest man in Millbury. Indeed, his father was manager and part owner of the great factory on the banks of the river, in which hundreds found employment.

Halbert found plenty to lawn upon him, and was in the habit of strutting about the village, swinging a light cane, neither a useful nor an ornamental member of the community.

After his brief altercation with Edward Kent he drew on a pair of kid gloves and looked about the room for Hester Paine, the lawyer's daughter, the reigning belle among the girls of her age in Millbury.

The fact was that Halbert was rather smitten with Hester, and had made up his mind to escort her home on this particular evening, never doubting that his escort would be thankfully accepted.

But he was not quick enough. Robert Rushton had already approached Hester, and said:

"Miss Hester, will you allow me to see you home?"

"I shall be very glad to have your company, Robert," said Hester.

Robert was a general favourite. He had a bright, attractive face, strong and resolute when there was occasion, frank and earnest at all times. His clothes were neat and clean, but of a coarse mixed cloth, evidently of low price, suiting his circumstances, for he was poor, and his mother and himself depended mainly upon his earnings in the factory for the necessities of life.

Hester Paine, being the daughter of a well-to-do lawyer, belonged to the village aristocracy, and, so far as worldly wealth was concerned, was far above Robert Rushton. But such considerations never entered her mind as she frankly and with real pleasure accepted the escort of the poor factory boy.

Scarcely had she accepted than Halbert Davis approached, smoothing his kid gloves and pulling at his necktie.

"Miss Hester," he said, consequentially, "I shall have great pleasure in escorting you home."

"Thank you," said Hester, "but I am engaged."

"Engaged!" repeated Halbert, "and to whom?"

"Robert Rushton has kindly offered to take me home."

"Robert Rushton," said Halbert, disdainfully. "Never mind! I will relieve him of his duty."

"Thank you, Halbert," said Robert, who was standing by, "I won't trouble you. I will see Miss Paine home."

"Your escort was accepted because you were the first to offer it," said Halbert.

"Miss Hester," said Robert, "I will resign in favour of Halbert if you desire it."

"I don't desire it," said the young girl, promptly. "Come, Robert, I am ready if you are."

With a careless nod to Halbert she took Robert's arm and left the house. Mortified and angry, Halbert looked after them, muttering:

"I'll teach the factory boy a lesson. He'll be sorry for his impudence yet."

CHAPTER II.

Of entrance to a quarrel, but, being in,
Bear it that the opposer may beware of thee.

Mrs. Rushton and her son occupied a little cottage; behind it were a few square rods of garden, in which Robert grew a few vegetables, working generally before or after his labour in the factory. They lived in a very plain way, but Mrs. Rushton was an excellent manager, and they had never lacked the common comforts of life.

The husband and father had followed the sea. Two years before the events narrated in the previous chapter he left the port of Liverpool as captain of the ship "Norman," bound for Calcutta. Not a word had reached his wife and son since then, and it was generally believed that the vessel had gone to the bottom of the sea.

Mrs. Rushton regarded herself as a widow, and Robert, entering the factory, took upon himself the support of the family.

Robert was up at six the morning after the circumstance took place which had given offence to Halbert Davis. He spent half an hour in sawing and splitting wood enough to last his mother through the day, then entered the kitchen, where breakfast was ready.

"I am a little late this morning, mother," he said; "I must hurry with my breakfast, or I shall be late at the factory, and that will bring a fine."

"It would be a pity to get fined, but you mustn't eat too fast. It is not healthful."

"I have a pretty good digestion, mother," said Robert, laughing. "Nothing troubles me."

"Still you mustn't trifle with it. Do you remember, Robert," added his mother, soberly, "it is just

two years to-day since your poor father left us for Liverpool to take command of his ship?"

"So it is, mother; I had forgotten it."

"I little thought then that I should never see him again!"

Mrs. Rushton sighed.

"It is strange we have never heard anything of the ship."

"Not so strange, Robert. She must have gone down when no other vessel was in sight."

"I wish we knew the particulars, mother. Sometimes I think father may have escaped from the ship in a boat, and may be still alive."

"I used to think it possible, Robert; but I have given up all hopes of it. Two years have passed, and, if your father were yet alive, we should have seen him or heard from him ere this."

"I am afraid you are right. There's one thing I can't help thinking of, mother," said Robert, thoughtfully. "How is it that father left no property? He received a good salary, did he not?"

"Yes; he had received a good salary for several years."

"He did not spend the whole of it, did he?"

"No, I am sure he did not. Your father was never extravagant."

"Didn't he ever speak to you on the subject?"

"He was not in the habit of speaking of his business; but just before he went away I remember his telling me that he had some money invested, and hoped to add more to it during the voyage which proved so fatal to him."

"He didn't tell you how much it was, or how it was invested?"

"No; that was all he said. Since his death I have looked everywhere in the house for some paper which would throw light upon it; but I have not been able to find anything. I do not care so much for myself, but I should be glad if you did not have to work so hard."

"Never mind me, mother. I'm young and strong. I can stand work; but it's hard on you."

"I am rich in a good son, Robert."

"And I in a good mother," said Robert, affectionately. "Now, to change the subject; I suspect I have incurred the enmity of Halbert Davis."

"How is that?" asked Mrs. Rushton.

"I went home with Hester Paine last evening. Just as she had accepted my escort Halbert came up and in a condescending way informed her that he would see her home."

"What did she say?"

"She told him she was engaged to me. He said coolly that he would relieve me of the duty, but I declined his obliging offer. He looked annoyed enough, I can tell you. He's full of self-conceit, and I suppose he wondered how any one could prefer me to him."

"I am sorry you have incurred his enmity, Robert."

"I didn't lose any sleep by it."

"You know his father is the manager of the factory."

"Halbert isn't."

"But he may prejudice his father against you, and get you turned off."

"I don't think he would be quite so mean as that. We won't borrow troubles, mother. But time's up, and I must go."

Robert seized his hat and hurried to the factory.

He was in his place when the great bell stopped ringing on the stroke of seven, and so escaped the fine, which would have cut off one quarter of a day's pay.

Meanwhile Halbert Davis had passed an uncomfortable and restless night. He had taken a fancy to Hester Paine, and he had fully determined to escort her home on the previous evening. Being much sought after among her young companions it would have gratified his pride to have it known that she had accepted his company. But he had been cut out, and by Robert Rushton—one of his father's factory hands.

This made his jealousy more intolerable, humiliated his pride, and set him to work devising schemes for punishing Robert's presumption. He felt that it was Robert's duty, even though he had been accepted, to retire from the field as soon as his, Halbert's, desire was known. This Robert had expressly declined to do, and Halbert felt very indignant.

He made up his mind that he would give Robert a chance to apologize, and if he declined to do so he would do what he could to get him turned out of the factory.

At twelve o'clock the factory bell pealed forth a welcome sound to the hundreds who were busily at work within the great building.

It was the dinner hour, and a throng of men, women and children poured out of the great portals and hastened to their homes to dine.

Among them was Robert Rushton.

As he was walking homeward with his usual quick alert step he came upon Halbert Davis at the corner of the street.

Halbert was dressed carefully, and, as usual, was swinging his cane in his gloved hand.

Robert would have passed him with a nod, but Halbert, who was waiting for him, called out:

"I say, you fellow, stop a minute. I want to speak to you."

"Are you addressing me?" asked Robert, with a pride as great as his own.

"Yes."

"Then you had better mend your manners."

"What do you mean?" demanded Halbert, his sallow face slightly flushing.

"My name is Robert Rushton. Call me by either of those names when you speak to me, and don't say 'you fellow.'"

"It seems to me," sneered Halbert, "that you are putting on airs for a factory boy."

"I am a factory boy, I acknowledge, and am not ashamed to acknowledge it. Is this all you have to say to me? If so, I will pass on, as I am in haste."

"I have something else to say to you. You were impudent to me last evening."

"Was I? Tell me how."

"Did you not insist upon going home with Hester Paine when I had offered my escort?"

"What of that?"

"You forgot your place."

"My place was at Hester Paine's side, since she had accepted my escort."

"It was very presumptuous in a factory boy like you offering your escort to a young lady like Miss Paine."

"I don't see it," said Robert, independently; "and I don't think it struck Hester in that light. I assure you we had a very agreeable walk."

Halbert was provoked and inflamed with jealousy, and the look with which he regarded our hero was by no means friendly.

"You mustn't regard yourself as Miss Paine's equal because she condescended to walk with you," he said.

"You had better associate with those of your own class hereafter, and not push yourself in where your company is not agreeable."

"Keep your advice to yourself, Halbert Davis," said Robert, hotly, for he felt the insult conveyed in those words. "If I'm a factory boy I don't intend to submit to your impertinence, and I advise you to be careful what you say. As to Miss Hester Paine, I shall not ask your permission to walk with her, but shall do so whenever she chooses to accept my escort. Has she authorized you to speak for her?"

"No; but—"

"Then wait till she does."

Halbert was so incensed that, forgetting Robert's superior strength, evident enough to any one who saw the two, one with his well-knit, vigorous figure, the other slender and small of frame, he raised his cane and struck our hero smartly upon the arm.

In a moment the cane was wreathed from his grasp and applied to his own person with a sharp, stinging blow which broke the fragile stick in two.

Casting the pieces upon the ground at his feet, Robert said, coolly:

"Two can play at that game, Halbert Davis. When you want another lesson come to me."

He passed his discomfited antagonist and hastened to the little cottage, where his mother was wondering what had made him so much behind time.

CHAPTER III.

This man hath marred his fortune.

Strong with mortification, and more incensed against Robert than ever, Halbert hastened home. The house in which he lived was the largest and most pretentious in Millbury—a large, square house, built in modern style and with modern improvements, accessible from the street by a semi-circular drive terminating in two gates, one at each end of the spacious lawn that lay in front. The house had been built only three years, and was the show-place of the village.

Halbert entered the house, and, throwing his hat down on a chair in the hall, entered the dining-room, his face still betraying his angry feelings.

"What's the matter, Halbert?" asked his mother, looking up as he entered.

"Do you see this?" said Halbert, displaying the pieces of his cane.

"How did you break it?"

"I didn't break it."

"How came it broken, then?"

"Robert Rushton broke it."

"Widow Rushton's son?"

"Yes; he's a low scoundrel," said Halbert, bitterly.

"What made him break it?"

"He struck me with it hard enough to break it, and threw the pieces on the ground. I wouldn't mind it so much if he were not a low factory boy, unworthy of a gentleman's attention."

"How dared he touch you?" asked Mrs. Davis, angrily.

"Oh, he's impudent enough for anything. He walked home with Hester Paine last evening. I suppose she didn't know how to refuse him. I met him just now and told him he ought to know his place better than to offer his escort to a young lady like Hester. He became angry and struck me."

"It was very proper advice," said Mrs. Davis, who resembled her son in character and disposition, and usually sided with him in his quarrels. "I should have thought that Hester had more sense than to encourage a boy in his position."

"I have no doubt she was bored by his company," said Halbert, who feared on the contrary that Hester was only too well pleased with his rival, and hated him accordingly; "only she was too good natured to say so."

"The boy must be a young brute to turn upon you so violently."

"That's just what he is."

"He ought to be punished for it."

"I'll tell you how it can be done," said Halbert.

"Just you speak to father about it, and get him dismissed from the factory."

"Then he is employed in the factory?"

"Yes. He and his mother are as poor as poverty, and that's about all they have to live upon; yet he goes about with his head up as if he were a prince, and thinks himself good enough to walk home with Hester Paine."

"I never heard of anything so ridiculous."

"Then you'll speak to father about it, won't you?"

"Yes; I'll speak to him to-night. He's gone away for the day."

"That'll pay me for my broken cane," said Halbert, adding, in a tone of satisfaction: "I shall be glad to see him walking about the streets in rags. Perhaps he'll be a little more respectful then."

Meanwhile Robert decided not to mention to his mother his encounter with the young aristocrat. He knew that it would do no good, and would only make her feel troubled. He thought himself with a little concern of the probable consequences of his action.

He caught the malignant glance of Halbert on parting, and he knew him well enough to suspect that he would do what he could to have him turned out of the factory. This would certainly be a serious misfortune.

Probably the entire income upon which his mother and himself had to depend did not exceed thirty shillings a week, and of this he himself earned twenty-four.

They had not more than two pounds laid by for contingencies, and if he were deprived of work that small amount would soon melt away. The factory furnished about the only avenue of employment open in Millbury, and if he were discharged it would be hard to find any other remunerative labour.

At one o'clock Robert went back to the factory rather thoughtful.

He thought it possible that he might hear something before evening of the dismissal which probably awaited him, but the afternoon passed, and he heard nothing.

On leaving the factory he chanced to see Halbert again a little distance in front, and advancing toward him.

This time, however, the young aristocrat did not desire a meeting, for, with a dark scowl, he crossed the street in time to avoid it.

"Is he going to pass it over, I wonder?" thought Robert. "Well, I won't borrow trouble. If I should be discharged I think I shall manage to pick up a living somehow. I have two strong arms, and if I don't find something to do it won't be for the want of trying."

Two years previously, Captain Rushton, on the eve of sailing upon what proved to be his last voyage, called in the evening at the house of Mr. Davis, the manager of the Millbury factory. He found the manager alone, his wife and Halbert having gone out for the evening. He was seated at a table with a variety of papers spread out before him.

These papers gave him considerable annoyance. He was preparing his semi-annual statement of accounts, and found himself indebted to the company in a sum nearly a thousand pounds in excess of the funds at his command. He had been drawn into the whirlpool of speculation, and through a London broker had invested considerable amounts in stocks, which had depreciated in value. In doing this he had made use, to some extent, of the funds of the company, which he was now at a loss how to replace. He was considering where he could apply for a temporary loan of a thousand pounds when the captain entered.

Under the circumstances he was sorry for the intrusion.

"Good-evening, Captain Rushton," he said, with a forced smile. "Sit down. I am glad to see you."

"Thank you, Mr. Davis. It will be the last call I shall make upon you for a considerable time."

"Indeed—how is that?"

"I sail to-morrow for Calcutta."

"Indeed—that is a long voyage."

"Yes, it takes considerable time. I don't like to leave my wife and boy for so long, but we sailors have to suffer a good many privations."

"True; I hardly think I should enjoy such a life."

"Still," said the captain, "it has its compensations. I like the free, wild life of the sea. The ocean, even in its stormiest aspects, has a charm for me."

"It hasn't much for me," said the manager, shrugging his shoulders. "Sea-sickness takes away all the romance that poets have invested the sea with."

Captain Rushton laughed.

"Sea-sickness!" he repeated. "Yes, that is truly a disagreeable malady. I remember once having a lady of rank as passenger on board my ship—a Lady Alice Graham. She was prostrated by sea-sickness, which is no respecter of persons, and a more forlorn, unhappy mortal I never expect to see. She would have been glad, I am convinced, to exchange places with her maid, who seemed to thrive upon the sea air."

"I wish you a prosperous voyage, captain."

"Thank you. If things go well I expect to come home with quite an addition to my little savings. And that brings me to the object of my visit this evening. You must know, Mr. Davis, I have saved up in the last twenty years a matter of two thousand pounds."

"Two thousand pounds!" repeated the manager, pricking up his ears.

"Yes, they have been saved by economy and self-denial. Wouldn't my wife be surprised if she knew her husband was so rich?"

"Your wife doesn't know of it?" asked Mr. Davis, surprised.

"Nothing at all. I have told her I have something, and she may suppose I have a few hundred pounds, but I have never told her how much. I want to surprise her some day."

"Just so."

"Now, Mr. Davis, for the object of my errand. I am no financier, and know nothing of investments. I suppose you do. I want you to take charge of this money while I am gone on my voyage. I meant to have made inquiries myself for a suitable investment, but I have been summoned by my owners to leave at a day's notice, and have no time for it. Can you oblige me by taking care of the money?"

"Certainly, captain," said the manager, briskly.

"I shall have great pleasure in obliging an old friend."

"I am much obliged to you."

"Don't mention it. I have large sums of my own to invest, and it will be no extra trouble to look after your money. Am I to pay the interest to your wife?"

"No. I have left a separate fund in a savings' bank for her to draw upon. As I told you, I want to surprise her by-and-by. So not a word, if you please, about this deposit."

"Your wishes shall be regarded," said Mr. Davis.

"Have you brought the money with you?"

"Yes," said the captain, drawing from his pocket a large wallet. "I have the whole amount here in notes. Count them if you please, and see that the amount is all right."

The manager took the roll of notes from the hands of his neighbour, and counted them over twice.

"It is quite right," he said. "Here are two thousand pounds. Now let me write you a receipt for them."

He drew before him a sheet of paper, and dipping his pen in the inkstand wrote a receipt in the usual form, which he handed back to the captain, who received it and put it back into his wallet.

"Now," said the captain, in a tone of satisfaction, "my most important business is transacted. You will keep this money, investing it according to your best judgment. If anything should happen to me," he added, his voice faltering a little, "you will pay it over to my wife and child?"

"Assuredly," said the manager; "but don't let us think of such a sad contingency. I fully expect to pay it back into your own hands with handsome interest."

"Let us hope so," said the captain, recovering his cheerfulness. "Our destinies are in the hands of a kind Providence. And now good-bye. I leave early to-morrow morning, and I must pass the rest of the evening with my own family."

"Good-night, captain," said the manager, accom-

panying him to the door. "I renew my wish that you may have a prosperous and profitable voyage, and be restored in good time to your family and friends."

"Amen!" said the captain.

Mr. Davis went back to his study, his heart lightened of its anxiety.

"Could anything be more fortunate?" he ejaculated. "This help comes to me just when it is most needed. Thanks to this special deposit, I can make my semi-annual settlements and leave a thousand pounds over. It's lucky the captain knows nothing of my speculations. He might not have been quite so ready to leave his money in my hands. It's not a bad thing to be a banker;" and he rubbed his hands together with hilarity.

When Mr. Davis accepted Captain Rushton's money he did not intend to act dishonestly. He hailed it as a present relief, though he supposed he should have to repay it some time. His accounts being found correct, he went on with his speculations.

In these he met with varying success. But on the whole he found himself no richer, while he was kept in a constant fever of anxiety.

After some months he met Mrs. Rushton in the street one day.

"Have you heard from your husband, Mrs. Rushton?" he inquired.

"No, Mr. Davis, not yet. I am beginning to feel anxious."

"How long has he been gone?"

"Between seven and eight months."

"The voyage is a long one. There are many ways of accounting for his silence."

"He would send by some passing ship. He has been to Calcutta before, but I have never had to wait so long for a letter."

The manager uttered some common-place phrases of assurance, but in his own heart there sprang up a wicked hope that the "Norman" would never reach port, and that he might never set eyes on Captain Rushton again.

For in that case, he reflected, it would be perfectly safe for him to retain possession of the money with which he had been entrusted.

The captain had assured him that neither his wife nor son knew aught of his savings. Who then could detect his crime? However it was not yet certain that the "Norman" was lost. He might yet have to repay the money.

Six months more passed, and still no tidings of the ship or its commander.

Even the most sanguine now gave her up for lost, including the owners.

Mr. Davis called upon them, ostensibly on behalf of Mrs. Rushton, and learned that they had but slender hopes of the ship's safety.

It was a wicked thing to rejoice over such a calamity, but his affairs were now so entangled that a sudden demand for the two thousand would have ruined him.

He made up his mind to say nothing of the special deposit, though he knew the loss of it would leave the captain's family in the deepest poverty. As a slight salve to his conscience, for he was not wholly destitute of one, he received Robert into the factory, and the boy's wages, as we already know, constituted their main support.

Such was the state of things at the commencement of our story.

When the manager reached home in the evening he was at once assailed by his wife and son, who gave a highly coloured account of the insult which Halbert had received from Robert Rushton.

"Did he have any reason for striking you, Halbert?" asked the manager.

"No," answered Halbert, unblushingly. "He's an impudent young scoundrel, and puts on as many airs as if he were a prince, instead of a beggar."

"He is not a beggar."

"He is a low factory boy, and that is about the same."

"By no means. He earns his living by honest industry."

"It appears to me, Mr. Davis," said his wife, "that you are taking the part of this boy, who has insulted your son in such an outrageous manner."

"How am I doing it? I am only saying he is not a beggar."

"He is far below Halbert in position, and that is the principal thing."

It occurred to the manager that should he make restitution Robert Rushton would be quite as well off as his own son, but of course he could not venture to breathe a hint of this to his wife.

It was the secret knowledge of the deep wrong which he had done to the Rushtons that now made him unwilling to oppress him farther.

"It seems to me," he said, "that you are making too much of this matter. It is only a boyish quarrel."

"A boyish quarrel," retorted Mrs. Davis, indig-

nantly. "You have a singular way of standing by your son, Mr. Davis. A low fellow insults and abuses him, and you exert yourself to make excuses for him."

"You misapprehend me, my dear."

"Don't 'my dear' me," said the exasperated lady. "I thought you would be as angry as I am, but you seem to take the whole thing very coolly, upon my word!"

Mrs. Davis had a sharp temper and a sharp tongue, and her husband stood considerably in awe of both. He had more than once been compelled to yield to them, and he saw that he must make some concession in order to keep the peace.

"Well, what do you want me to do?" he asked.

"Want you to do! I should think that was plain enough."

"I will send for the boy and reprimand him."

"Reprimand him!" repeated the lady, contemptuously. "And what do you think he will care for that?"

"More than you think for, perhaps."

"Stuff and nonsense; he'll be insulting Halbert again to-morrow."

"I am not so sure that Halbert is not in fault in some way."

"Of course you are ready to side with a stranger against your own son."

"What do you want me to do?" asked Mr. Davis, submissively.

"Discharge the boy from your employment," said his wife, promptly.

"But how can he and his mother live?—they depend on his wages."

"That is their affair. He ought to have thought of that before he raised his hand against Halbert."

"I cannot do what you wish," said the manager, with some firmness, for he felt that it would indeed be a piece of meanness to eject from the factory the boy whom he had already so deeply wronged; "but I will send for young Rushton and require him to apologize to Halbert."

"If he won't do it?" demanded Halbert.

"Then I will send him away."

"Will you promise that, father?" asked Halbert, eagerly.

"Yes," said Mr. Davis, rather reluctantly.

"All right," thought Halbert; "I am satisfied, for I know he never will consent to apologize."

Halbert had good reason for this opinion, knowing as he did that he had struck the first blow—a fact that he had carefully concealed from his father.

Under the circumstances he knew very well that his father would be called upon to redeem his promise.

The next morning, at the regular hour, our hero went to the factory, and, taking his usual place, set to work. An hour passed, and nothing was said to him.

He began to think that Halbert, feeling that he was the aggressor, had resolved to let the matter drop.

But he was speedily undeceived.

At a quarter after eight the manager made his appearance, and, after a brief inspection of the work, retired to his private office. Ten minutes later the foreman of the room in which he was employed came up to Robert and touched him on the shoulder.

"Mr. Davis wishes to see you in his office," he said.

"Now for it," thought Robert as he left his work and made his way through the deafening clamour of the machinery to the superintendent's room.

(To be continued.)

THE DUC D'AUMALE'S PICTURES.—It is the intention of the Duc d'Aumale to transfer to Chantilly the collection of his pictures now at Twickenham, which he has formed during the last twenty years at a cost of 160,000*l*. The public is to be admitted every Sunday to see these works of art when they are installed.

SNAILS AS FOOD.—A very extraordinary article of diet, agreeable to Roman palates, has just come into season at Rome. In the morning shrill voices call through the streets, "Lumache! belle lumache!" ("Snails! fine snails!") and countrywomen with large baskets of freshly gathered snails are to be seen stalking along, and surrounded every now and then by early housekeepers, who either boil the snails, shells and all, making menestras of them, or, having attained superior skill in cookery, stew the creatures, season them, and fry in oil.

THE DEATH WARRANT OF CHARLES I.—Though it has long been known that this important document contains numerous erasures, the nature and scope of those erasures have never as yet been inquired into. This has now been done by Mr. William J. Thoms, who has published the result of them in *Notes and Queries*, and if he is correct in his views a very startling result it is. Mr. Thoms

holds that the warrant was in part signed on the 26th or the 27th of January, and not on the 29th, as it professes to be; that it was intended to execute the king in the week preceding the 29th; that those to whom the warrant was originally addressed declined the responsibility of seeing it carried out; and that the official record of the proceedings of the High Court of Justice is not to be depended upon. Mr. Thoms has opened up a very interesting question which must receive farther attention.

HURRAH THE SEA!

HURRAH the great and rolling sea,
The mighty, open, surging lee,
The ocean wave that ever rolls
Between the overlying poles.

HURRA the blue, the ever blue,
The old, and yet the ever new,
The great confined, yet ever free,
The bounded, yet the unbounded sea.

Hurrah the great globe's broad highway,
The wide traversing, traversed bay
That mirrors many a cloud and star
In every clime, the near, the far.

HURRA the blue above, and hail
The green below my flowing sail;
All hail, thou buoyant element,
Thou emblem of true might, Heav'n sent.

Hurrah, thou broad pond of the whale,
Whereon the man-wrought arks doth sail;
Illimitable, round expanse,
Where great fish roll while billows dance.

Hail, sea! to many zones and spheres
Thou hast borne me for forty years;
And, though grown now too old for thee,
Thou'rt still my old love—boundless sea.

A SAILOR.

HAIL TO THE PLOUGH, AND HURRAH FOR THE COW!

HAIL to the plough, the useful plough,
And, ay, all hail to the dairy cow.
She ruminates where daisies spring,
And blue-bells hang, and linnets sing.
Hurrah, all hail to the useful plough;
And hail, hurrah, the dairy cow.

Hail the passing plough again,
Good, peaceful implement of grain
That cuts the earth, but makes no wound,
And pierces, but ne'er harms the ground—
That turns the sod and lays it bare,
To plant the grain of life's staff there.

All hail! a cow, with coat of silk,
That yields the rich and poor the milk,
Supplying peasant and the peer
With yellow butter—giving cheer
To rustic's and to prince's board,
The creamy store she doth afford.

Let's sing Heav'n bless the comely cow,
And that useful implement, the plough;
These things we bless, for the human race
They bless with plenty and with grace;
Without such blessings we might be
The victims of sad scarcity.
Then hurrah for the cow and the plough
sing we.

A SAILOR TURNED RUSTIC.

SCIENCE.

THE TEXAS PACIFIC RAILWAY is to be 1,515 miles in length. For two hundred and fifty miles the road is to be air-line, and in a stretch of eight hundred and fifteen miles there will be but six bridges.

EVERY iron rail on a north and south railroad is a magnet, the north end attracting the south pole and the south end the north pole of a magnetic needle. So also is a rail on such a railroad, the lower flange attracts the south pole and the upper flange the north pole of a needle.

SPONTANEOUS COMBUSTION OF SILK.—We learn that it has been found that silk goods containing picrate of lead frequently catch fire in transit by railway. Experiments made in consequence show that a very slight amount of friction is sufficient to ignite samples of such silk fabrics.

SEPARATING WATER FROM STEAM.—The invention of Mr. James Shepherd relates to apparatus for separating water from steam before admission to the engine-cylinder. The steam flows from the steam-pipe into a chamber divided into two parts by an upright partition, and containing a deflector formed with lower bars, or with inclined slots or perforations, which deflect the steam downwards into a water-chamber, where the steam parts with its water. The steam then rises on the other side

of the partition, and re-enters the steam-pipe, or flows to the said pipe through the spaces between a number of metal rods, which assist in the aforesaid separation.

PHOTOGRAPHING THE PULSE.—The ingenious apparatus invented by Dr. Ozanam, of Paris, for rendering the variable beatings of the pulse visible, is already proving itself of practical value. It consists of a camera lucida, about ten inches wide, in which a piece of mechanism, moving at a uniform rate, pushes a glass plate, prepared with collodion, in front of a very narrow aperture exposed to the light. In this aperture is a glass tube, in which a column of mercury may rise or fall, as in a thermometer. By attaching to the wrist a rubber tube, filled with mercury, in connection with the tube of the apparatus, the beating of the pulse is received on this artificial artery, and the pulsations are transmitted to the recording apparatus. As the column in the tube acts as a screen, light can penetrate the aperture only where the column is deficient; consequently the prepared plate becomes black under the influence of light everywhere except at such places as the column intercepts it. As the column rises and falls with each pulsation of the heart, these black lines on the prepared plate, pushed regularly forward, will be longer or shorter alternately, and will be successively photographed as being lines perpendicular to a common base; the heart being thus made to register photographically its own pulsations. These photographic representations can be so magnified as to be rendered visible across a large amphitheatre, and such is the peculiarity of the apparatus, in its adaptation to different uses, that it may be modified so as to register the variations of respiration, the irregular action of coughing, and similar physiological and pathological phenomena.

THE CULTIVATION OF FUNGI.—Dr. Coats gives an account of some observations of Professor Rindfleisch which are of great interest, and when farther prosecuted are likely to lead to important results. His object has been to find a method by which he could cultivate fungi in such a manner as that while the substance is exposed to the air it should be kept from all impurities. With this view he prepares a square microscopic cover-glass, by placing a small drop of wax at each corner, so that when the cover-glass is placed on the slide it is supported as on four pillows of hard wax. The substance to be observed is placed in the centre of a well-cleaned glass slide, and the cover-glass is then placed on it, being afterwards slightly fixed by wax at the four corners. By this means the substance to be investigated is situated beneath the centre of the cover-glass, and around it under the cover-glass is a thin zone of air. But this zone is so thin that it will be perfectly still, and no dust will be carried in by currents, while at the same time there is nothing to interfere with any chemical change which may occur between the air and the growing fungus. This method being devised, the author proposes to sow various substances with the spores of different fungi, and observe the results. It is to be observed that during the intervals of observation the preparations are kept in a moist atmosphere. The first observations recorded were made with mould fungus. A portion of apple pulp was placed on a slide, and this sown with spores of the fungus found in rotten apples (*Botrytis cinerea*), and the growth of the fungus was seen to take place in the most beautiful manner. It was remarked that, strangely enough, though the mycelium of the fungus grew continuously, the spores were produced only at night. The fungus (*Achorion Schenleinii*) was next subjected to observation. A fungus crust was moistened with a drop of distilled water and treated as above. The fungus grew, but its growth was comparatively slow, threads growing out from the moistened crust and producing spores. The spores were rod-shaped as they were formed, but on the addition of a drop of water they swelled up and became globular. The same fungus was also cultivated on a portion of the fruit from plum jam, and the result was a much more vigorous growth than when the fungus crust was merely moistened. The different parts were distinctly larger and the growth richer, so that the author describes it as quite a tropical growth of the fungus.

LORD ELCHO has just purchased a fine marble bust of Oliver Cromwell, taken from life, by the English sculptor, Edward Pearce. This artist was occupied largely with work for the City companies in and about the time of the Commonwealth.

PROPOSED LARGE STEAMSHIP.—It is stated that specifications are at present in the hands of several Clyde shipbuilders for a new vessel for the National Steamship Company. She is to run between Liverpool and New York, and is to be of gigantic proportions, second only to those of the "Great Eastern." The dimensions are to be: length over all, 576 ft.; breadth of beam, 50 ft.; depth of hold, 35 ft. It is expected that this great steamship will make the voyage from port to port in seven days.



[THE CORONET RESTORED.]

THE LOST CORONET.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"One Sparkle of Gold," "Evelyn's Plot," &c., &c.

CHAPTER I.

With stern, resolved, despairing eye
I see each aimed dart;
For one has cut my dearest tie,
And quivers in my heart,
Like ministers of grief and pain.

ESTELLE DE VESCI lay feverishly tossing on the couch to which she had been consigned on her return from the interrupted bridal, and from which she had not yet attempted to rise.

True her eyes still remained closed as if in the endeavour to court the slumber whose soothing sweetness her throbbing temples and agonized heart refused to allow her to enjoy. But the incessant movement of her limbs and the quivering of her lips proved the terrible wakefulness which kept every sense in torturing activity.

Her beautiful cheeks were ghastly pale, save where one deep red spot burned as a fearful contrast to the ashen hue around, and her lips had faded to the dull, lifeless red that ever betokens either illness or the falling of age in their possessor. She was indeed the wreck of her former self.

Thus she had continued during that weary day and restless night, and now again the dawn of another morning came to summon her to such exertion as the weakened powers would permit. But nothing appeared to rouse her to any effort; she only turned angrily from any attempt of those around her to recall her to more necessary and practical duties of life.

No one perhaps could fully guess the tumult raging in her labouring breast; but there was one gentle heart that even in her own shame and sadness could sympathize with her erring child.

"Estelle," said a soft voice, "Estelle, my poor, unhappy child, will you not calm yourself for my sake? Will you not confide all the miserable past in your mother's bosom? Guilty and imprudent as you may have been I will never desert my child. Estelle, it may be that even my weakness may sustain your strength if you will cast yourself on my mother's love."

There was a pathos in the tone, a gentleness in the words that might have melted a stone, even the burning heart and proud nature of the distracted girl, and for a moment Estelle's eyes opened with a wild appeal in their dark brilliancy, a burning agony in their hot balls, that betokened a craving for sympathy, that could no longer be controlled.

Lady Claud took her hand in hers and her own soft tears rained on its dry palm.

"My child, tell me all; only confide in me, your mother, and all may yet be well. Let us hide ourselves from the censorious world; let us give that terrible man all that he may require for his ill-gotten rights over you, then there may be peace if not happiness yet in store for us, my misguided child. You will learn to love your mother when you feel that she alone remains to you, that she alone is constant in the hour of your disgrace and need."

Something in the words seemed to sting the girl well nigh to madness. She shook off her mother's soft palm as if it had been a viper's clinging touch, and the gentle woman actually shrank back in affright from the fierce look in the young face as it turned suddenly on her.

"Mother, mother," she repeated, "my mother is my greatest foe. I hate—I would curse her if I dared."

Lady Claud shrank back in terror. She believed that Estelle's senses were deserting her, and in her natural nervous timidity she listened eagerly for some approaching footsteps to bring her that help which she dared not appear to summon.

There was a sound of some one who came nearer and nearer to the chamber door.

The steps were measured and heavy as of some person who lacked either health or activity to possess elasticity of tread, and Lady Claud trembled in the belief that the dreaded bridegroom of her misguided child was coming to claim his plighted wife.

Estelle too seemed attracted by the sounds. Her eyes opened and turned wistfully to the door, with a look that seemed well nigh to resign itself in its despair to the worst that fate could have in reserve for her doomed head.

The fingers touched the handle of the door, the lock rattled and turned, and the tall figure of Ruth Lovett appeared, worn and emaciated, and with limbs that seemed almost to refuse their office, but still wearing the stern, hard rigidity that knew neither pity nor forgiveness nor fear.

She had more the air in her dreamlike, still movements and colourless skin of one rising from the dead than a living, breathing woman.

Estelle started up from her pillows as she first saw the unwelcome apparition. Then, by a sudden if natural weakness, she shrank back again within her couch and covered her head with the clothes in shuddering horror.

But there was no escape. Even with those closed eyes, that thick barrier, she felt the terrible orbs glaring on her, and the sound of those approaching steps nearing her side.

A low moan of "Save me, save me!" escaped her lips, but in vain.

No human power could avail now to hide the truth. No pleading, no threats would silence her whom she had so deeply and so cruelly wronged.

Lady Claud was the first to speak.

"Ruth, I fancied you were hopelessly ill," she said, in her gentle tones, "and if so you should be more inclined to sympathize with an invalid. You see Lady Mont Sorrell is in no state to endure more suffering. If you have ought to say to her let it be deferred till she is more able to hear and answer you."

Ruth shook her head.

"No, no; she deserves no pity, and she shall have none at my hands. She has broken every tie that could bind her to her kindred, and that kindred will cast her off from them in scorn. She has dared to risk the sin of matricide, and the mother she has thus foully dealt with will visit the penalty on her guilty child. Estelle, Countess of Mont Sorrell, your mother stood beside you with warning and pleading on her lips, and you scoffed and rebelled against her prayer. Now she comes to carry out her threats on your disobedient head."

"No, no, it is not so," interrupted Lady Claud as she saw Estelle's limbs shaking in terror at the slowly pronounced words. "I could not be so cruel. Do not fear, Estelle. Guilty as you are there will be pity and shelter for you in my bosom. I can never forget the only child of my widowhood, never cease to cherish the sole pledge of my lost husband. Ruth, you are not a mother or you could not speak thus."

The woman laughed in bitter scorn.

"Not a mother," she said. "Would that it were true. Would that all the sins I have committed for the sake of him who betrayed me and the child I bore to him could be washed away and be as if such ties had never existed. No, no, Lady Claud De Vesce, wife of him whom I loved so passionately, usurper of the place which was mine in heart and promise, the time has come when the secrets of long years shall be revealed, and my carefully planned revenge completed on those I hate. Know then that your whole life has been blighted by my means, your child's fair fame ruined, and your latter years made desolate and solitary. This proud girl, who is as much like you as an eagle to a dove, or a hawk to a tamed canary, is your husband's daughter but not yours. She is a De Vesce in blood but not in name. I, Ruth Lovett, was his beloved wife in heart but not by legal ties, and the mother of his beautiful but not lawful child. Now you have the truth, and the coronet must be stripped from the brow that was held too haughtily to secure its safety or her own."

Lady Claud's lips moved but she could not frame the words that were struggling in her heart. She literally could not move the tongue that clove to the roof of her mouth.

At last the words came, low and indistinct:

"Where is she—my child?"

"Where is she? why, in a felon's cell, with prison dress on her fair form and prison fare to support her delicate frame, and her good name stained by the verdict of a jury and the public scorn," repeated Ruth, with bitter emphasis. "Yes, Lady Claud—hated wife of him I loved so dearly, passionately, as you with your cold, soft nature cannot even imagine to yourself—yes, that was my revenge. Now can you not guess the whole truth, or am I to dwell on the painful memories of my blighted life, and tell you what has dogged your steps and poisoned your entire existence from your marriage day till this hour?"

"Speak," said Lady Claud, "speak. I would know all the miserable truth."

"Then you shall, you shall," was the reply. "Know it, and may the knowledge rankle in your heart. Your husband's love was mine from the first hour he saw me to the last of his life, and when he died the light of my existence was clouded for ever. Yet, mark me, he did not know of the glorious revenge that I practised on you. I feared that the pride of birth might interfere to overcome the love that he bore to me and to his child. I feared that my sport might be injured by the scruples of my high-born lover. Thus when my own infant girl, scarce a month older than your pale, delicate babe, was exchanged for yours, even though your father was ignorant of the fate of his lawful offspring. Only one woman, your nurse, was aware of the fraud, and she yielded to the temptation of the gold which I could obtain at will from your husband and she believed would enable her to secure the fortunes of her own orphan boy."

"But where, where is she—my own?" Ruth, Ruth, speak. My brain whirls; I cannot even think. Tell me, I implore you, if there is one human, womanly feeling in your bosom."

"Oh, it is soon explained," returned the woman, calmly. "I had no wish to claim the care without the honours of maternity, so when Ethel, Lady Mont Sorell, pined in jealous envy for her barrenness, then I at once sketched out my scheme. I placed your child in her arms as the adopted heiress of the coronet of Mont Sorell and gave you mine, thus by a clever arrangement securing my own immunity and the suitable training of both the children. But I vowed that in due time I would be revenged on you and the pale, weak girl you had brought into the world by hurling her down from her usurped eminence."

"Then she is mine, my own precious one, my own Pauline, my tender, loving child!" Lady Claud almost shrieked. "Oh, Ruth, I could almost forgive and bless you for the knowledge."

"Yes, the felon, Pauline Lovett, is in truth the Countess of Mont Sorell," returned Ruth, scornfully. "Only as the English law is made alike for peers and peasants I cannot see that it will avail much to release her from her penance. It is a worthy ending to my revenge," she added, bitterly.

Estelle had sat up in her couch, her lips apart, her eyes fixed on the harsh, stern woman whom she had so cruelly outraged, and her hands so clasped that the nails well nigh drew blood. But now for the first time she spoke.

"Woman, you deserve all, and more than all I have wrought!" she said, fiercely. "Why have you made me your victim by such senseless tortuous wind-lags? If Lady Mont Sorell was to have a child, pained off as her own, why did you not at once secure to me the coronet that my father should have worn?"

"Simply because I knew that your nature must show itself as the imperious mistress of your weak mother, and serve as a living punishment for the woe I had suffered," returned Ruth. "Oh, yes," she added, with a scornful laugh, "I knew full well that the child of Claud De Vesci and Ruth Lovett could have little softness in her temper; I knew that she would triumph over and scorn her supposed mother's weakness. Besides, it was glorious to torture my rival in her tenderest affection—glorious to snatch from her her only comfort by hurling down the daughter she instinctively loved from the heights of rank and power; and glorious to plunge that rival's child in the very depths of disgrace and misery. Only your own stubborn, unscrupulous temper—your utter selfishness and vanity and pride—have marred the completeness of the scheme. But the child has turned on the mother, as a tigress on her dam, and you have brought the terrible ruin on your own head, while striving to free yourself from the sole obstacle to your wild and wayward will."

"Pray who is so obliging as to lecture my gentle wife in my behalf?" said a voice that made Estelle cling with a faint shriek even to the trembling and powerless Lady Claud.

Walter Fitzwarren advanced to the very centre of the little group with a strange smile on his features and a sharp, questioning glance at Ruth.

"Your wife can best do the honours of the presentation," returned Ruth, calmly. "Estelle, it is for you to explain to your husband that it is your mother whom you have outraged, and who believes a greater punishment cannot be poured on him or on you than the cementing of the ties you secretly formed. Mr. Fitzwarren, this young woman is—unluckily for us all—not only your wife but my daughter, and the relationship which unites us is scarcely more sympathetic than the fate she intended for us. I was imprisoned as a lunatic, and dosed with drugs that might well have made the charge a reality. You I presume have had scarcely less tender treatment at her hands, to judge from your words and looks and rumours that I have heard."

"No, no, no—it is all false! How dare you?" she added, turning to the cold, stern-looking Ruth; "how dare you be guilty of such falsehoods? It is revenge, spite, madness! You must bring proof—unanswerable proof—or I will submit to the degradation!"

"Peace, girl, peace!" returned Ruth, sternly. "I have the register of your birth, the evidence of the nurse of the Lady Claud—ay, and, if it were needful, of the midwife who attended me in my trial, and she would swear that the eyes of my babe were dark as the night, while Pauline De Vesci's are blue as the open sky in mid-day. No, no. It is as true as the sin and the misery of which you have been the cause. You know it—you feel it, Estelle; your quivering lips and wild eyes show your despair and your belief."

There was no doubting the woman's words; the look, the tone, had an unanswerable truth and solemnity in them.

Estelle crouched down in her couch, and the bed shook under the groans and sobs that convulsed her to the very centre of her frame.

Walter Fitzwarren gazed in mute, dark bitterness on her despair.

"This is scarcely what I bargained for," he said, "either when I accepted this remarkable young woman's willing vows or when I engaged to pardon the attempt on my life, which only the most miraculous accident frustrated; and, as I neither wedded Estelle Lovett nor forgave the illegitimate and penniless murderess who sought my destruction, I decidedly repudiate any such disgraceful connection for an honourable and well-born man."

The girl gave a passionate scream.

"Walter, Walter, you cannot—you dare not be so wicked! It was you doing that I am not the wife of Otho Fitzwarren; it was you who tempted my girlish weakness; it was you who first caused the breach between me and—"

"The false lover of your injured cousin, Pauline, Lady Mont Sorell," interrupted Walter, coolly. "It is but the same cross you prepared for an innocent and suffering girl, only that in her case, it was sweetened by patience and sweetness and purity, while to you there can be no such palliation. However I warn you that the slightest attempt on your part to claim any rights on my hand or protection will at once be met by an open accusation of your murderous intention to bury me in that ruined mine, from which only the superhuman strength and fiftful will of a poor idiot rescued me. Now you understand. I have proof—abundant proof—and, if you dare your fate after this warning, I shall show you neither pity nor remorse, even if you stood at the bar where your cousin displayed such heroic calmness. Lady Claud, I felicitate you on your deliverance from so terrible a penance as your supposed daughter's evil passions must have inflicted since her infancy. I have the honour to wish you farewell."

With a low bow, almost mocking in its profundity, and a last, dark, thunder look at the unhappy Estelle, he hastened from the room.

CHAPTER II.

Mortals that would follow me,
Love, Virtue—she alone is free;
She can teach you how to climb
Higher than the airy clime;
Or, if Virtue fails, were
Heaven itself would stoop to her.

THERE was an unusual sensation in the busy seaport town of Dartmouth, which the very elements appeared to countenance by their strife.

Amidst the roar of thunder and the flashes of lightning, and the unusual accompaniment of stormy winds that lashed the sea to a fury which warned the mariners to exercise caution even in their safe anchorage, the tidings had rapidly spread of the arrival of an express engine and carriage, with three rather suspicious occupants, at the terminus of the London railway.

Suspicious be it remarked in their companionship, for the rank and breeding of one of the three

were so remarkably contrasting with the rough appearance and plebeian features of the others that it was at once deduced as a result that some important discovery must be impending for such haste and for such strange association.

When a carriage to the dock was ordered, and then any amount offered to a boatman willing to convey the adventurous party on board an especial ship, the impression was confirmed.

"Did you hear, Bill, that swell cove offered fifty pounds if needful to any one who would take him and his mates on board the 'Lindsey,' bound for Melbourne," said one of the boatmen to another. "What does it mean? I'd not risk my life for double the sum. I've too many young ones who depend on me for that."

"What does it mean? Why, of course, that either they want to be off or to stop some one who is already off, and to judge from their looks I should say the latter," returned his superior officer. "I'm blessed if those two are not detectives, and the third is a real swell, and none of your make-believes. Yes, I expect some cove with a few thousands in his trunk is off on the 'Lindsey.' See, they're off. He's young Dick Sadler and his cousin who are taking them, and I expect the fifty will be doubled if they get there in time."

The men watched them through their glasses as they toiled along, and every instant their little barque seemed swallowed up by the waves to rise again on the heights of some foaming billow.

It was indeed a matter of life and death, and the men were light and active and young, and the reward liberal and exciting. Ere a quarter of an hour had passed the passengers stood on the deck of the Australian vessel, which had but just put back to the port from stress of weather in her first attempt to leave the English shores.

There had been a somewhat perplexed and earnest attention as the boat had fought its perilous way, and when at length its tenants stood on the deck all who were at leisure to follow their own inclinations were eagerly grouped round the new comers.

"Captain Swainton, I presume," said the one who had been pronounced a swell, addressing a tall, weather-beaten man, who was evidently the head of the crew of the "Lindsey."

"That is my name and rank, sir. What is your pleasure?" returned the officer, looking rather suspiciously at the two companions of his interlocutor.

"It is a very simple but disagreeable one," said the young man, who may be as well introduced at once as Lord Breton. "I fear, captain, that we shall have to diminish your passengers by one if not more, unless the information we have received is incorrect. May I ask if you have any such name on your books as Nicholas Lovett?"

"I think not. I have no remembrance of any such person," replied the officer.

"It may very well be that the man in question has assumed another name. Will you allow me to see your living freight, Captain Swainton?" he added, with a glance at his companions, who at once advanced to the rescue.

"Yes, I believe our credentials will be sufficient to warrant such a proceeding, sir," the elder and apparently superior of the two put in. "You will see what he is wanted for, and as we have tolerably correct information to trace him to your vessel I hope you will give every facility to effect the capture."

Captain Swainton read attentively the document that was handed to him.

"Well, it's rather a queer sort of time when all hands are wanted," he returned, rather gruffly, "but if you, my lord, and these good fellows will wait a bit till this blow is over I will let you see every man on board, whether passenger or sailor, for, to say truth, there is no great fun in having such a rascal on board as you describe this fellow. It's as bad as Jonah. Maybe he's raised all this hurly-burly," he continued, with a half-grin that betokened a mixture of sailor-like superstition and rough boldness.

It might almost have seemed as if the captain's predictions were correct.

In a brief space from the arrival of the searchers the thunder and lightning died away, and the storm lulled till it fairly gave place to the low grumbling and the troubled tossings of a fading tempest. Then the business commenced.

The passengers' roll was gone over, but no particulars contained in its long list could at all answer to the description that Stanley Breton held. Then the crew were gradually gone over, and still no name appeared answering to the one required.

"There's nothing for it but to have the men told off," said Captain Swainton, "and I'll answer for it there's no hook or corner in the ship where any runaway will get into hiding."

"There's no fear of that, captain," said a stern, rough voice. "I'm not going to be caught like a

rat in a trap. If it comes to the pass I can die like a man as well as a livelike one."

The burly form of Nicholas Lovett advanced from the group of sailors on the lower deck and stood before the astonished captain.

"Why, Watson," he said, "are you mad? I'd the best references for you that I had for any man in the ship. And I know that you served for years under my old friend Clifford. Your head is turned, man."

"Not at all, captain—at least not now," returned the man. "But it may have been in former days. Sometimes I think it was. Harkye, young sir," he added, turning to Stanley Brereton. "If you do wrong by my girl the curse of a dying man will rest on you to your last hour—ay, and pursue you beyond the grave, because she's an angel, and as innocent as ever a spotless lamb in the midst of black, ravening wolves. No, no! I'm not quite so hardened as to leave the trail of my black wickedness behind me on her sweet snowiness. Listen to my last words. She, Pauline Lovett, is as innocent of the crime with which she is charged, or any knowledge of it, as an unborn babe. What's more she shall not have to blush for her father having avenged for murder. What's more still I'll give blessing, poor child, though I have been a degradation to her in life. So here goes."

With a bound like an enraged tiger, and ere any one had either time or daring to stop his progress, the powerful and reckless man broke through the astonished group, and in another moment had jumped overboard into the surging ocean.

There was a general cry, a rush to the side of the vessel, and more than one brave fellow jumped overboard to rescue the desperate and drowning man.

Boats were lowered, lifebuoys cast out, and everything that either skill or humanity could suggest was employed in his behalf. But in vain.

As if to carry out his prediction of preventing the pain and the agony which might have tortured poor Pauline at his criminal and public condemnation; the unhappy man sank to rise no more, and if his body was ever discovered it was too far from the scene for either his story to be known or his name visited with the execration it deserved.

"Have you anything more for me to do, Mrs. Clannore?" asked the sweet, sad voice of a young girl, clad in the plainest costume, that yet seemed to derive a kind of grace from her high-bred mien, and lovely features.

"Hasten, bless you, child, that's not what I came for," returned the worthy woman, who, even in truth, the matron of the prison where Pauline was confined. "You've done many a good turn for me, that I must say, since you came, and been a blessing to the place. I only hope it won't depart from it when you go away."

Pauline smiled sadly. "There is not much reason to speak of that at present," she returned. "It's many a long month to my liberation—ay, it may be counted by years at present," she said, with a wan smile.

"Don't be too sure of that," returned the woman, with a meaning smile. "There's a sunshine where it's least expected in the blackness, and there's friends raised up to them that deserve it. It may be the case with you, my child, for you've suffered patiently and merit a reward."

Pauline's eyes opened painfully, and her lips quivered as she listened.

"Mrs. Clannore, what is it—what is it?" she cried. "Please don't keep me in suspense. Has any one come?"

"Yes, how foolish I am to be sure when that was what I had to say, and he'll be waiting. But, dear me, there's no harm done; you've waited long enough, I'm sure. But I'll go and fetch him as soon as you're ready. Won't you smooth that pretty hair, though to say truth it's better as it is, all down your pretty shoulders."

Without any clear explanation of the mystery, the woman went to the door of the little chamber that by great favour had been allotted to Pauline in return for the skill and industry she displayed in needlework and various other feminine services to the matron in her arduous charge.

Pauline's eyes followed her anxiously. But scarcely had the door closed behind her than it was pushed open, and in another moment, ere she had time to thank much less to speak, the slight form of the much-tried Pauline was clasped in the arms of the lover who had been so true and so constant in her deep, dark woes.

"Pauline, my angel, my beloved," he murmured, in broken accents. "Thank Heaven that you have lived to see this hour, thank Heaven that it has given you strength to support such frightful sufferings. At this pass, now—you are free, my darling, and a human one and love can avail you shall never know a pang more."

The manly tears were actually raining on the

girl's cheek as it was suddenly raised from Stanley Brereton's embrace with a half-terrified look.

"Stanley, what is it? Do not trifle with me. Why is this? Why should I be free?"

"Because you have been proved to be innocent, my precious one," he replied. "The whole world will do justice to my peerless bride."

The girl started painfully.

"Stanley—Mr. Brereton—is this your truth? Have you kept your promise so ill?"

"Not so, not so, my darling. Believe me I have preserved my vow," he said. "But, my beloved, do not inquire into such painful details. Pauline, can you not trust me? can you not wait till I feel it right to tell you all the painful yet blessed steps that have led to this result?"

Pauline gazed up into his face.

She read the honest, candid eyes, the unflinching look, the frank, loving smile, and she would have been more or less than woman could she have resisted the conviction that he was the noblest and truest of beings.

"I do, I do," she said, with childlike sweetness. "Only, alas, alas! I must not forget my duty. It is not for me—the obscure felon—the low-born daughter of a most unhappy man—to bring any stain to your proud name. Stanley, dear, kind, generous friend, you have done enough; you have brought me freedom and vindicated my innocence; now all must be at an end. Only be sure I will always remember and bless your name so long as life lasts."

Stanley gave a half-arch, half-sad smile.

"Do you then consider any disparity of rank so fatal to happiness?" he asked, gravely.

"I dare not, I must not risk your future honour, your bright prospects—perhaps your love," she said, plaintively.

Again the same inexplicable smile crossed his features.

"It ill becomes me to imitate your proud humility," he said, shaking his head, "but Stanley Brereton, the barrister, ought not to aspire to the Countess of Mont Sorrell, with countless thousands and an unstained and noble name, for his bride."

The girl gasped for breath.

"Stanley, Stanley, this is cruel—unworthy of you," she said, sadly.

"Pauline, my angel love, my peerless one, my heroic girl, can you wear the tidings I have to give?" he said, drawing her again to his heart. "Can you once more assume your proper place and claim the lost coronet which is your rightful possession and the sweet and gentle mother who is pining to claim her idolized child?"

The girl—to use the words of the Holy Book—"trembled exceedingly" as she listened.

"Stanley, dear Stanley," she whispered, "if I dare, if I could hope to enjoy such blessings, they would be yours—all yours."

"Yet you considered but now that it was very shocking to ignore difference of rank," returned the young man, with a triumphant smile, "and the richly dowered countess should scarcely encourage the hopes of the unlucky, struggling barrister, Stanley Brereton."

"Only that he is the preserver of my life, the noble and generous lover during my deepest disgrace and misery, and the sole sunbeam that has glided my darkest gloom," said the young girl, fervently.

"Stanley, my whole life and all I have to give could not recompense that noble trust and faithful truth. It is but giving to myself," she added, softly.

"But you have never asked the details; you have not even now learned the whole truth," he resumed, after a true lover's burst of gratitude for the welcome assurance.

"How selfish I am. And to forget that my blessings must be another's loss," she said, with a sudden pang. "Poor, poor Estelle. Is it possible that the tale was not true? And yet you said I had a mother," she resumed, doubtfully. "No, Stanley, it seems too much; I am unworthy of such blessings."

"I shall leave the tale to be told by that gentle mother's lips," he said, with another fond caress. "And I, too, have forgotten in my own bliss that another's rights to your love and tenderness are pining for gratification."

And, opening the door of the small chamber, he let the trembling yet happy girl along a dark narrow corridor and up a short flight of steps to a large and more commodious apartment, of which he quickly opened the door and revealed to Pauline's enraptured gaze the sweet, tearful, well-remembered face of the Lady Claud De Vesce, eagerly watching for the signal of her new happiness.

"Pauline, my darling, my child, my perfect, worshipped child!" she sobbed, as she clasped her in her arms. "My heart at least was true to its instincts. I felt—I knew that you were my own, my beloved, my precious treasure, my only child—the sunshine of my heart."

And for some brief minutes the parent and the child tasted mingled bliss, such as is seldom partaken of in this uncertain world of woe.

But even their exquisite happiness was chequered after a brief space by the self yet sad sympathy, the thrill of horror for the crime and misery of others. And as Pauline listened to the strange story which awaited her young ears, although palliated and shadowed to the utmost by the tender delicacy of the Lady Claud, she shuddered with more unrestrained emotion for her guilty cousin than she had ever displayed for her own bitter woes.

But even those pangs were silenced when a gentle tap at the door announced the advent of him she loved best on earth, and the glowing flush on her delicate cheek as he approached well nigh restored her former bloom.

"Lady Claud," he said, "may I rob you just as you have received your treasure? May I ask for this precious hand which I have ever considered as my most coveted boon? Will you give her to the humble barrister who would gladly have wedded her in her prison cell?"

"I will give her to you, Lord Brereton, but not part with her," was the reply. "You must allow me a corner in your household, though I will not say—as poor Ruth did—that I will demand access to her at all times as my right. But after so many years of lost happiness I cannot endure to part with the sunshine of my life."

And Lord Brereton and Pauline De Vesce knelt before the sweet and gentle lady who had suffered almost as much torture as the child whose virtues had been tested even as gold in the fire is tried.

The lost coronet having been restored to its rightful possessor, little remains to be said of the fortunes of those who had been concerned in its fitful fate.

Quentin Oliphant remained abroad till his safety was tolerably ensured by the lapse of time; and the facile and weak character which had led to all his misfortunes induced him to yield finally to the influences of the set among whom alone he could find a cordial reception while under his heavy cloud.

A gambling quarrel at last completed the ruin which Estelle's fascination had begun, and the once-beloved suitor of Pauline—the accepted lover of Estelle—slept unknown and unlamented in a foreign grave.

Mrs. Consell and her idiot son were pensioned by Pauline's bounty, and a commodious house and suitable attendant provided by the sympathizing countess for the strange votary of her charms who had played so remarkable a part in the drama of her fortunes.

To his last days Davie was obedient to Pauline's lightest command, and his half-witted worship might have shamed the less faithful homage of more gifted mortals.

Lady Alice Vernon never recovered the mortification of the mistaken cruelty she had displayed to the fair and persecuted countess, and although Julia was a constant and favoured guest at The Towers and clung to dear Pauline as simply and trustingly as if no coronet sat on her brow, yet no persuasion on the young countess's part could induce her former patroness to renew the intercourse which her own unfeminine cruelty had snapped.

"I am too proud to be forgiven," she said, "and too sincere to pretend that I do not need pardon."

And thus the evil spirit resisted to yield even to the sweet and loving charm of one whose fascinations wielded an almost universal power over all who came within their spell.

Estelle Lovett's haughty spirit could not bear even a softened rehearsal of the trial she had inflicted on her beautiful and heroic cousin.

No soothing—no proposed aid—no forgiving affection could avail to heal the terrible wound to which her own hand had placed an additional poison.

And the brain, which long tottered, at length gave way beneath the torturing anguish of remorse and mortification.

Estelle, whilom Countess of Mont Sorrell, was a hopeless lunatic.

No friendly voice, no forgiving eyes could soften the affliction, for the very names of Lady Claud or of Pauline were sufficient to produce an access of frenzy that was terrible to behold.

Her injured if erring husband was induced by Stanley Brereton's persuasion to accept a handsome annuity and leave the miserable girl in peace to the care of her noble-hearted relatives. But the frightful injuries he had received by the accident of which he had been the victim shortened his life by the long train of maladies that the shattered constitution suffered, and he died some years before his guilty and unconscious wife.

The long-lost will of the murdered Rashleigh Freshfield having been discovered among the effects

of Nicholas Lovett on board the "Lindsey," by its provisions Jonas found himself totally disinherited from any share in his uncle's property.

Eether Farn was more true in her womanly attachment than her harsh, stern nature might have betokened; she clung to the degraded, reckless man as faithfully in his utter beggary as she had done in his temporary prosperity.

But Pauline and her husband never forgot that the innocence of the young countess had been proved by the woman's agency; and, hard and reckless as she was, they did not desert her when no longer in need either of her services or afraid of her jealous revenge.

And when the youthful heir of Mont Sorell came at length to complete his parents' happiness, and Mrs. Consell proudly held in her arms the child of her who had so nobly pardoned the miseries inflicted on her, by the fraud of which the old dame had been the instrument, Ruth Lovett also appeared, after a long seclusion from every creature who had ever known or heard of her strange story, and knelt before the babe in a kind of remorseful pleading.

"Child," she said, "now I can hope for pardon since my wicked fraud has been at once punished and atoned, and the earldom of Mont Sorell will pass to the son of her who so nobly and heroically sustained the terrible reverse of that lost coronet that could never be worn by a more lofty and spotless brow."

THE END.

LORD DANE'S ERROR.

CHAPTER XXV.

LORD DANE spent his time—unsuspecting of what was in his cunning valet's brain—at Leuseleigh, until the investigations concerning Rupert Vassar's mysterious murder were quite over, for the present certainly.

The murdered man had been the most bitterly hated enemy he had ever known. He was positively almost glad he was dead, and it was not any interest in him that made the haughty and powerful earl haunt the neighbourhood of the investigation that was going on, and had lasted altogether nearly six months.

A stranger who had been seen lurking in the vicinity was arrested, and really brought to trial; but some facts came out at that trial which pointed directly at another as the guilty one.

These, together with testimony brought forward by the prisoner's own counsel, resulted in the man's acquittal.

Another came in for the black burden of popular condemnation and aversion the acquitted man had borne.

That other was Volney Heath.

It is only fair to Lord Dane to say that he had not helped on this result by a single word or act.

He had been very ill himself at the time of the murder; he had not even been well enough to assist in the identification of the body.

He knew nothing about the deed, and, though called upon to testify in the case of the man tried and acquitted, he had not been able to say anything bearing much upon the question. When suspicion began to point its black finger at Heath he still held aloof.

"I'll have nothing to do with it that I can help," he said, sternly, to himself. "I feel wicked enough without that. I hate him so much that I couldn't act fairly by him."

Volney's whole miserable story came out, however, or the most of it.

Lord Dane's influence barely sufficed to keep Sybil's name from absolute public comment.

It was known through the length and breadth of the land that Heath had passed himself off as Lord Dane to some young lady of good family; that he had married her and brought her still deceived to Leuseleigh.

The whole country rang with amazing, romantic, and improbable details.

Fabulous accounts of the perfections, the marvellous loveliness, the immense wealth of the cheated young wife were given; but, thanks to the obscurity in which so much of Sybil's life had been passed, and thanks perhaps far more to Lord Dane's vigilance, her real identity—the fact that she was the daughter of the murdered man, that she was the last representative of the once haughty and powerful Vassars—was kept from public notice.

Lord Dane watched, listened, investigated for himself. He endeavoured to do so fairly, and when he came—he thought honestly—to the conclusion that Heath had done the deed he tried to prevent and fancied he succeeded in keeping any feeling of personal vindictiveness from mingling with the natural indignant horror of a murderer.

But he could not help repeating to himself that he

was justified now in hunting him down, in delivering from his power the wronged girl he had married. He would not be the man to deliver him up to justice. He should go free as far as he was concerned if he agreed to do the only thing left for a villain like him to do. He must confess all to his wife and leave her. The law should do the rest—and then—

One can imagine what would happen then if it were in his power to accomplish it.

It must be remembered that he still believed that Sybil and the girl who had made such a powerful impression upon him at Falkner were one and the same person.

The warrant for the arrest of Volney Heath for the crime of murder had been some time issued, but nothing had come of it yet. The officers had not been able to find him.

Lord Dane decided that he had stayed long enough at Leuseleigh, and ordered his man to pack up.

Cheeny looked slightly startled.

"I thought we were going to wait here till next week, my lord?"

"I'm not. I can't endure it any longer. Now that I know Heath did the deed every hour that he is with her is torture to me."

Cheeny knew, of course, who his master supposed "her" to be, and as he turned at once to the packing, according to orders, he gave Lord Dane such a queer glance—one of mingled malignancy and cunning—that it was well for him that his lordship did not observe it.

It would perhaps have set him thinking about his precious confidential valet.

Cheeny was deep in a packing-case the next moment.

He came out of it presently to say:

"There is that little business of the papers, my lord, if you will pardon me for reminding you."

"What use is there in reminding me? You haven't found them, I presume?"

"No, my lord."

Cheeny, with his head in the packing-case again, laughed silently. He liked to remind the earl now and then of the existence of those two little papers, which could, once found, make him a beggar, worse off than his own servant, for Cheeny could earn his living, and he was morally certain Lord Dane could not.

"You haven't found the papers? Have you the least idea where they are?" Lord Dane asked, irritably.

"I have not, my lord; but I think the young lady, your lordship's relative, may have."

Cheeny lifted his head and looked at the earl. Lord Dane understood who was meant. It was Perdita Lorne.

He frowned.

"Why do you think that? Have you any reason?"

"I put some one to watch her, as you requested, my lord."

"Humph! I think you requested yourself, Cheeny; but no matter about that. What has come of the watching?"

"The young lady has been talking to a lawyer."

"That is nothing. You told me she suspects nothing."

"She did not, I am sure, at the time I told you. At Rylands she never would have suspected. Now she has certainly got hold of some clue concerning her own birth."

"How do you know what she went to a lawyer about? How do you know she went at all?"

"My aunt lodges with Mrs. Lorne, the adopted mother of the young lady."

"Well?"

"The widow told her."

"I don't believe there is anything in it, Cheeny."

"I hope there is not, my lord; I sincerely hope there is not."

Cheeny went on with his packing. The earl stared angrily out of the window.

"I don't know what to do," he said.

Cheeny made no farther remark until his master pointedly addressed him again.

"Can't you think of something?" he demanded, fuming. "You can always think of plenty when it's not wanted."

"I've nothing new to propose, my lord."

"Humph! Something old then."

"Do you still object to Rylands, my lord?"

"Abduct her, you mean? They don't do such things now-a-days; you ought to know that."

"I think it could be managed, my lord, quietly too."

"Tell me how, will you?"

"If you will leave it to me I promise you there shall be no violence, certainly till she is there, and then it may not be necessary even to turn a key upon her. She might be brought to consent to an arrangement for money. She is so simple-minded and unsuspecting that I think once away from a lawyer or

the Widow Lorne's advice she might be bought off very easily."

Lord Dane did not look round.

He still shrank with the chivalry of a naturally noble nature from thus warring upon woman. But he had grown gradually more and more familiarized with what had revolted him at first, and still revolted him, but in a different and far less degree.

We can familiarize ourselves with anything, hence the danger of contact with evil.

Certainly Cheeny now put his scheme for getting his master out of this difficulty in a very cunning and plausible style.

He waited anxiously for the earl's response.

Lord Dane was reasoning with himself.

"She wouldn't know how to hold her own as a Countess of Dane," he was thinking; "an ignorant rustic in the pretty milkmaid style. It might be a kindness to her, as Cheeny says, to let her stay as she is, simple Perdita Lorne. I wish I knew where I had heard the name."

He had seen it on the fly-leaf of a book which Miss Channing, by chance, had left behind her in the hotel parlour at Falkner.

The earl turned towards Cheeny at last, but he did not look at him. He could not conquer his shame of what he was about to do enough to look his own servant in the face while he talked of it.

"It's a bad business," he said, "but it's the only way I'm afraid. Take care that she is not frightened, Cheeny, and let her have everything she wants."

"Except her liberty, my lord," suggested Cheeny, with secret malice.

"Yes, except that," he replied, sighing. "Make any arrangement you can. When it's all settled you shall name your own price."

Cheeny's face was buried in a trunk at that moment, consequently his master did not catch the peculiar evil smile which curved his thin lips or the following muttered sentence:

"Before that time comes, my lord, I mean to have claimed my reward from the true Countess of Dane."

Cheeny could hardly control his exultation at having at last obtained the earl's consent to his plans—literally his plans, for, though he could not proceed a step farther without that consent, they were in reality plans for his interest which Lord Dane had consented to.

The exulting valet moderated his transports enough presently to ask, with a humble look on his face:

"Is it the understanding then that I am to begin upon this business at once?"

"At once."

"I shall need some money, my lord."

"How much?" and the earl took out his cheque-book.

Cheeny named a moderate sum.

Lord Dane signed and passed a cheque to him.

The valet's eyes glittered greedily as he glanced at the amount.

The cheque was filled in for double what he had asked for.

"Thanks, my lord," he said. "It will be convenient if I should need more than I said. Have I your permission to go to London by the first train? Or shall I wait for your lordship?"

Lord Dane took out his watch.

"There is plenty of time. Finish the packing. I will go with you."

The valet's face turned deathly white. He thought in the excitement of the moment that the earl meant he would go with him to see Perdita. All would certainly have been over with him then. But his master's next words brought the colour back into his cheek.

"I want to have a talk with the detectives about Heath, and the sooner the better," said Lord Dane.

He noticed his servant's change of countenance wonderingly. He made no remark at the time, but it set him thinking.

Arrived in London, he startled Cheeny very much by asking him for Miss Lorne's address.

The frightened valet neither dared to refuse nor to give a false address.

He gave the true one, and the earl wrote it down in his pocket-book.

Cheeny felt alarmed.

It was not alone that his audacious golden and ambitious schemes were in danger of coming to naught—though the mere thought of such a contingency was unendurable to him—but, aside from that, his master had a tolerably sunny temper in general, and Cheeny knew what he was capable of when it was once fairly roused.

It did not require any study to guess what his fate would be if Lord Dane found him out. A broken head at the very least. Indeed that was the one grim and terrible shadow hanging over the future.

The earl would find him out some time, and how he should escape from his fury then he could not conceive.

He got out of his master's presence as soon as he could after giving him that address. He wanted to be where he could think.

The patron saint of all wickedness must have come to his assistance; for he proceeded at once to act upon a thought that occurred to him.

He did not dare leave the vicinity of Dane House, for fear the earl should go out. He went to an eating-house in sight, and got a seat by a window from which he could see Dane House.

It was an hour before he quitted his lurking-place. He had seen the earl coming down the marble steps at last.

He hurried to meet him with an air of flurry and importance.

"My lord," he said, eagerly, "if you will permit me I will go to Graystone by the seven-o'clock express."

"To Graystone?" uttered the earl, in amazement. "What for?"

"It may be nothing. I mean it may not be true; but I have just seen a man who was footman there for several years, and he intimated that Mr. Heath was at Graystone."

"Impossible!"

"I said so at first, my lord; but still it might be. I could go there and back in less than twenty-four hours, if you liked to risk this other affair that much longer."

"But Heath would never go there after what he has done."

"No; I shouldn't think he would," said Cheeny, with an air of candour; "and yet it would be about the safest place he could find. It's out of the way of gossip, and they doubtless think yet down there that he is Lord Dane. I mistake much indeed if the police would not look for him anywhere sooner than at Graystone."

Lord Dane looked a good deal startled at this view of the matter.

Cheeny watched his face anxiously, as he reflected a moment, taking out his watch and glancing at it.

"I'll go to Graystone myself," he said, finally. "I was just going to look at that address you gave me."

He gazed straight at the false valet, who turned pale as before, and instantly averted his face.

For the second time a pang of misgiving assailed the earl.

At any other time he would have heeded it. Why did he not now?

Because the news that Heath was at Graystone had roused all the worst passions of his soul. He could not rest till he had seen him. To put himself face to face with him—and Cheeny knew that—he would have disregarded a thousand such misgivings as this.

Yet it warned him that the very man who brought him word about Heath might be dealing treacherously with him in another matter. If deceitful in one direction why not in the other? But he did not think of that.

He spoke very sternly to Cheeny, however. "Before that young lady goes to Rylands I mean to see her. I want to see that aunt of yours too. Mind that you do nothing in that affair till you receive farther orders from me."

Cheeny promised obedience most obsequiously, but at the same time he did not mean to obey. If he risked anything by following the last course he risked much more by the first. He imagined, indeed, that while he had so clever a tongue, and so credulous a master, he had very little real cause for fear. He could have laughed at the readiness with which the earl lent himself to his evil planning.

Pity it was that Lord Dane could not have guessed what a puppet he was in the hands of his own servant.

The earl went on his bootless errand by the seven-o'clock express.

Cheeny only waited till he had been driven off in his brougham for the terminus. Then, after a hasty visit to his own apartment, he summoned a handsome cab, and was driven rapidly to the London suburb in which Perdita lived.

He knocked boldly at the door, and as he had expected—knowing the widow to be visiting at Leuseleigh—Perdita herself opened it.

She looked amazed, as well she might, to see Cheeny, whom she knew perfectly well by sight. She flushed and turned pale both in one moment.

Cheeny solemnly extended a letter he had brought.

"A letter for you, miss, from his lordship," was all he said.

Perdita received it without suspicion, of course—it was in the same handwriting as the others. She opened it before him.

It was very brief.

"Darling, I am dying. Come to me. Cheeny will tell you, and bring you—"

Perdita looked up in blank horror.

Cheeny did not dare to meet her eyes then. He felt that his own evil soul would look out at her and frighten her out of his toils if he did. He kept his gaze steadily fixed on the floor.

Perdita was trembling.

"Why is there no signature?" she asked, as calmly as she could.

"He was too ill, miss."

"What were you to tell me?"

"Anything you wanted to know about his lordship. I was to bring you to him, if you said you'd come."

"Where is he?"

"At a seat of his in Scotland."

"And he is really—dying?"

"The doctor says so, miss. My master has never been himself since a trick Mr. Heath served him, near six months ago, at Leuseleigh."

Perdita shuddered.

"When can we go if I conclude to return with you?" she asked.

"There's an express at nine, and it's only seven now."

"To-night?" exclaimed Perdita.

"The sooner the better, miss, begging your pardon, if you want to find his lordship alive. He mayn't be living now. This is the only chance."

"I will go," cried Perdita, her face like ashes as she hurried to get ready.

Cheeny drew a deep breath, and passed his hand over his face.

"I'm glad that's over," he muttered; "she's just as foolish about him as all the rest of the women are."

CHAPTER XXVI.

WE left Heath listening, horror-stricken, to the conversation between Baron Chandos and his wife, expecting every moment that the baron would allude to the murder of Rupert Vassar at Leuseleigh.

A cold moisture broke forth upon his forehead. He was in agony. He wished to step forth and confront the baron and Sybil, and in some manner break off that terrible conversation. But he seemed chained to his seat. He felt in the clutch of a frightful irresolution.

What if accident had revealed his connection with Vassar's presence in the little stone house in the Ghost's Hollow? What if this man were really a police detective come to find him and accuse him of the murder?

Preposterous as these fancies seemed he could not rid himself of them.

His eyes fastened upon the baron between the parted curtains, and devoured the expression of that still, white, brooding face.

The baron was about to speak when the door opened and the servant entered, bringing upon a silver tray the simple lunch he had ordered.

An ebony card table was wheeled forward, and the tray placed upon it.

Sybil herself deigned to place a carved and cushioned chair for the baron's occupancy.

"It is very home-like, is it not, my lady?" said the baron, delighted. "Ah! I am so domestic, it is a real treat, this—quite as if instead of being the forlorn bachelor I am I had a wife as beautiful and obliging as your ladyship."

Sybil blushed and laughed instead of seeming displeased at the familiar tone.

The baron sat down and began to eat his bird, his rolls, and to drink his milk.

It was a good opportunity to come forward and mingle in the conversation Heath thought.

In fact he did not dare neglect it, and therefore, much as he disliked to face the keen, dark, penetrating glance of his guest, he rose and left his retreat.

Sybil smiled brightly at sight of him, and came and clasped her hands upon his arm.

"I was wondering where you were, Talbot. Baron Chandos and I have been getting acquainted. Did you hear us playing?"

"I did."

Volney started at the sound of his own voice, it was so changed and husky.

Sybil noticed it also.

"Has anything happened, Talbot? Are you ill?" she asked, in a low voice.

Her husband answered her with a look of agony. He would have given worlds to be able to control his face, to have kept that look out of it, but he could not; and, worst of all, as he faced the baron, his scorching black eyes were fastened upon him with, it seemed to him, a keenly scrutinizing expression.

That look, however, if it had been there at all, vanished instantly. The white-faced baron smiled, and remarked that he was enjoying himself—he always did—and her ladyship was a fine musician, and went on with his meal.

"There is nothing the matter," Volney said to his wife, in a low voice; "nothing—that is, except a slight headache, which is not worth mentioning."

He felt that he must somehow account for the terrible depression which had so suddenly and unaccountably come upon him.

Sybil left the room for a moment, and her husband took the opportunity to make a request that the baron should not talk of her father to his wife. She had suffered so much in losing him that he never dared mention his name to her.

The baron bowed politely and poured out for himself a glass of champagne, which he drank before he spoke.

"I have just come from England," he said; "the excitement caused by that unhappy man's tragical fate has not yet entirely passed, though it happened so many months since. I do not wonder at her ladyship's disinclination to hear the subject mentioned."

"She does not yet know how her father came to his end; I have carefully concealed it from her," Volney said, coolly.

"Ah?"

Volney winced as though there had been significance in the sweet, silvery voice. But he must have imagined it.

It continued to rain during the whole of the following day, and Baron Chandos and Sybil spent a large portion of the time at the piano. In the intervals the baron conversed in a lively and entertaining manner. He had been a great traveller, and recounted his experiences with a spirit and vivacity that Sybil found very charming.

Volney held aloof as much as he dared, but it seemed to him that wherever he was the stranger baron watched him furtively. However the day was passing, and to-morrow he and Sybil would be left to themselves again.

But he was calculating without his host. In the morning Selim was still pronounced unfit to travel, and the baron declined to borrow a horse for the journey. He seemed well content to remain where he was.

He had given no explanation of his presence in this remote and usually untravellered part of the country, except the general one of being a traveller, yet Heath felt satisfied that his visit to the chateau was not accidental, but premeditated.

Some instinct told him that Baron Chandos was here for a purpose, and that he meant to stay until it was accomplished.

Sybil expressed herself in raptures with the baron's society.

They had been so full before she declared, which was bitter news to Volney, and before the frown thus called forth had left his brow the baron sportively begged him not to be jealous of him, a poor, homeless wanderer, who did not often bask in the smiles of angels.

Sybil only smiled indulgently at this florid speech.

Her husband flushed angrily and bit his lips, seeing which, Baron Chandos remarked, gazing steadily at him:

"I have been looking ever since I came for his lordship's resemblance to his father, the late earl. I see it now. He is certainly very like him at this moment."

Volney felt himself grow cold. He flashed a glance at Sybil's smiling face, and then at the baron.

Was he mocking him?

The baron's looked features told nothing.

"You have recently come from England you told me, did you not, baron?"

Volney spoke involuntarily. He was tortured with a fear lest his guest knew the true Lord Dane.

"I have just come from England," the baron answered, politely.

"You have an extensive acquaintance there perhaps?"

Volney looked him full in the face.

"I have."

"I never heard of you till last night," Volney said, in a hard voice.

"But I have heard of you," was the reply.

Volney drew his breath short. It was coming now.

In another second Sybil would know all, but yet he could not stir.

He stood like one petrified instead of leaping with all his strength upon his enemy—he who had vowed to himself a thousand times that no one save himself should tell Sybil that story and live.

But no, the baron laughed happily, gleefully.

"Who that is an Englishman has not heard of the handsome, powerful, courted young Earl of Dane?"

Volney breathed again.

"Strange that we never have met till now, baron," he said.

"Not at all as I look at it."

Something in the other's expression stopped farther

questions from Volney. He went out of the room suddenly, with just a glance at his wife and a set look in his handsome face.

Going to the upper landing, he seated himself in one of the recesses of the carpeted corridor on which his guest's apartments opened.

By-and-bye the baron strolled that way. Heath had waited patiently. He rose now and advanced.

"Can I speak with you?" he asked, steadily.

The baron bowed courteously.

"In your own apartment, please, Lady"—he corrected himself—"my wife might come into my room, and what is to be said between us I don't choose she should hear at present."

They entered the baron's chamber. Heath himself closed the door and locked it.

The faintest shadow of uneasiness crossed the baron's brow as he watched him, but his keen, bright glance did not waver as Volney approached him.

"I want to know who you are, and what you are here for?" Volney said, in a low, passionate voice. "I know that your coming to this out-of-the-way spot was not chance."

The baron did not hesitate, though something like pity shone in the depths of his black, bold eyes.

"I never said it was chance, if I recollect rightly," he answered.

Heath shivered a little.

"You acknowledged, then, that you have an errand—name it."

"Do you tell me you have not guessed it?"

"What matters it whether I have or not? If you are a man tell me yourself."

"I know you. You are Volney Heath, not Lord Dane."

"Are you a tool of his—Dane's?" Volney demanded, fiercely, careless of the admission he thus made of his own identity.

"I am here without Lord Dane's knowledge. He left England the same day I did though, and on the same errand, or nearly so."

"You have not told me that errand yet."

Heath spoke more calmly now. The nearer danger came the braver he grew. His was not after all a cowardly nature.

"I came to look for the murderer of Rupert Vassar."

Heath gazed at him steadily, a pained glitter coming again in his deep eyes. The thought of where Vassar had been slain—shut into the prison whither he had decoyed him—was always a bitter memory to him.

"Perdita has told them how he came there," he thought now, "and they think I killed him."

He drew a heavy sigh as he spoke at last, with slight scorn in his voice.

"You have come to look for a murderer you say, baron? Do you think you have found one?"

"No."

The baron said the monosyllable in a doubtful, puzzled way.

"I never was surer of anything in my life than that you were he till I came here," continued Baron Chandos.

"And now—"

"I confess that I am more than doubtful. I have had some experience in reading faces, and I don't think you could meet the pure eyes of that beautiful girl downstairs so unshrinkingly if yours had been the hand to slay her father."

A sudden whiteness flashed over Volney's face. His lips parted, but his voice broke down on the first word. He covered his eyes with his hand, but the tears broke through between the trembling fingers.

"Pardon me," he said, shaking off the glittering drops, and lifting his head, loftily, only to drop it again, sad and humbly. "I am a very miserable man—bad and wicked enough, Heaven knows—but I am as innocent of Rupert Vassar's death as Sybil herself."

"I believe you," Baron Chandos answered, in a low voice.

"Thanks."

There was a brief pause, then Volney said:

"I was afraid of you from the first."

"Why?"

"First, your face and voice were English. Then your first glance at me betrayed, I fancied, an interest beyond that natural in a total stranger. Besides, this is an unusual name for any English traveller to take. I am afraid of you still, even after you have told me you do not believe I did the murder. Are you in the detective police? Is your name an assumed one?"

"I am not in the police. I have no connection with it. I am truly Baron Chandos."

Volney reflected for a moment.

"It seems rude to question you farther, but I must ask, if only to be rid of it. If you are not in the

police why have you hunted the down? Why did you come here to look for the murderer of Rupert Vassar?"

"I had a duty to perform."

The baron looked gravely at Volney, who returned that almost mournful gaze with one of anxious perplexity.

It was Volney who spoke next, the colour flitting painfully to and from his thin and wasted cheek, his voice one of deep agitation.

"I—I thought you came here to destroy me. I looked upon you as an enemy, and yet there is something in your face just now that seems to say that, sunken and unworthy as I have become of any gentleman's regard, you have at this moment a kindly feeling for me. Pardon me, baron. Is it so?"

His handsome, haughty eyes were fastened upon the baron's almost appealingly.

Chandos smiled his own, rare sweet smile, that so softened his stern face.

"Yes," he said, "I have a kindness for you. I have had all the time. I meant to help you if you were guilty. But I should only have done so from a sense of duty. Now I shall help you because, much as I may blame you for what you have done, I pity you more for what you have suffered."

Volney looked startled. His face was positively ghastly with surprise.

Once, whatever his situation, his proud soul would have writhed at the thought of being pitied.

Now, so broken was his spirit, so crushed was he under the burden of falsehood he had so long borne, that he could have sobbed in his agitation and misery but for the restraint he put upon himself.

The baron extended his hand.

Volney took it in both his.

"I don't understand how it is. Why should you have any friendliness for me?" he said, in a trembling voice.

The black bright eyes dropped, the monosyllabic lip twitched a little.

"I am 'Uncle Paul,' Volney, my boy," replied the baron, looking up suddenly and putting a tender hand on his shoulder. "You haven't forgotten me?"

Heath stared as though he had seen a spirit. Back through the years his memory seemed to flash to the moment when he stood in the storm before the Widow Lorne's humble door, Perdita a helpless babe in his arms, himself only a lad.

No wonder the baron's face had looked so familiar. The greater wonder was that he had not instantly recollected him, for Baron Chandos's face was a very striking one.

The rush of recollection now fairly made him stagger. Had the hour arrived for the solution of that old mystery? He had always shrunk from the remembrance of it somehow. He had always suspected that it covered some shame or ignominy worse than the uncertainty was. What was he about to hear? Something that would sink him still lower than he already was?

(To be continued.)

KING VICTOR EMANUEL has sent as a present to the Emperor of Austria a hunting service made of the horns of chamois killed by himself while hunting in the valley of Aosta. The mounting is extremely rich and the workmanship by the celebrated goldsmith Tverbenoff of Turin. The service is composed of seven pieces. Three large horns have been transformed into a powder flask, four other smaller horns form drinking-cups. The designs and execution are highly finished and very handsome. They represent animals, hunting scenes, garlands of flowers, etc., of silver in alto and basso relief. The service is enclosed in an inlaid case of walnut wood, in the midst of which are the arms of the Emperor in silver.

A GIGANTIC EXHIBITION.—America is already preparing for one of the greatest festivals in which she has ever been permitted to participate. Every year brings its Fourth of July, with its attendant roar of cannon and rush of eloquence. But the year 1876 will bring the hundredth anniversary of the Declaration of Independence, and America will celebrate the centenary of its birth among the nations. Fairmont Park, near Philadelphia, will be given up as the site of a great industrial exhibition designed to show the progress of society during the course of a century. The site is a colossal one, and the arrangements for carrying it out are in proportion; the erection of buildings covering not less than fifty acres of ground being contemplated. Directed with the energy which the Americans are accustomed to bring to bear upon these undertakings, the exhibition, unique in its design, will probably be unparalleled in its success.

THE ETON AND HARROW CRICKET MATCH.—The Eton v. Harrow cricket match, the great event of the season at Lord's, terminated in favour of the former by seven wickets to spare. This was the 33rd match between the two schools, and Eton is now two vic-

tories ahead. There was a remarkably large and fashionable company on the ground.

WARNED BY THE PLANETS.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE Earl of Strathpey held his word as sacred, nevertheless he told what in polite parlance would be called a white falsehood when he avowed his intention of going to London. And white falsehoods are about as disastrous in their results as black ones, for if the earl had not indulged in this one he would have spared himself many a day of bitter agony.

Since that afternoon when, as he galloped over the Tyrol on his return from the shepherd's cot, that terrible suspicion flashed across his mind, Lord Strathpey had not known one hour of rest. He possessed just the temperament to seize upon a silly suspicion, magnify it, and brood over it till it grew into a torturing reality.

The sudden fancy that struck him was that the little flaxen-haired boy with a face so wondrously like Lady Pearl was his wife's child. Strangely enough it never occurred to this gifted peer that the boy might be his own child, and the one who bore his name and was to be his heir might be an impostor. No such idea ever entered his mind, he fully believed that his own babe, marked with the scarlet cross, as dozens of the male Strathpeys had been before him, had been restored to him; yet he harboured the foolish suspicion that the little Tyrol lad, whose face haunted him day and night, might be the child of his countess. He, her husband, thus dishonoured her by a slanderous suspicion, yet if any living being had dared to utter such a thing in his hearing he would have struck the offender dead at his feet.

Once in his mind, the fancy haunted him like his shadow. How else could he account for his wife's visit to the cottage—for her strange conduct—and, above all, for her obstinacy in refusing to confide in him the cause of her unrest and depression?

At last the poor man's torture grew to be unbearable, and he determined to go back to the Tyrol and solve the mystery. He would find some way, either through fear or bribery, to force the secret from the gift-tongued old woman; and he would see the child again and judge by its age and appearance whether his terrible suspicions were true or false.

Accordingly he made his arrangements, and started his white falsehood about going to London. But instead of wending his way to the metropolis he went straight down to Dover Harbour, and crossed the Channel by the first steamer, little dreaming that the very next one would bring his wife over.

From Calais he started direct for the valley of the Rhetian Alps, but midway, at a little wayside inn, he fell ill. His constitution was like iron, but it sank beneath the incessant mental torture he had endured within the last few weeks, and for two nights he lay prostrate, scorched with fever.

But the moment the fever abated he listened to his feet, and in opposition to the entreaties of the surgeon who attended him he started off, white as a ghost, and only just able to keep on his feet.

The September sun hung low in the sky, and all the grand old Swiss peaks glittered with his departing glory, on the afternoon when Lady Strathpey reached the Tyrol valley. Colonel Vernon had sent a despatch from Calais to Paris, and learning that his friend was something better, he accompanied her.

At a small public-house at no great distance from the shepherd's cottage he hired a carriage and drove across the smiling, green valley. Driving with the intuitive instinct of a gentleman that the poor mother would sooner seek her child alone, he assisted her to alight from the carriage at the edge of the little coppice, and avowed his determination to remain there with the vehicle until she should return.

Lady Strathpey walked, briskly over the short space that intervened between the coppice and the cottage, her heart throbbing so wildly as almost to stop her breath. A mingled melody of tinkling bells and lowing herds floated on the balmy evening air, but unmindful of all, unconscious even of her glorious surroundings, the countess hurried on.

Half way across the slope of meadow land a pal of obdurate laughter startled her, and just before her, clustered upon the velvet sward beneath a giant oak, she beheld a young kid, garlanded with wild-wood blossoms, an immense Alpine sheep-dog, and a little boy in a scarlet smock and plumed cap. The little fellow was sitting astride the dog's back, dipping his curly head, and shouting with childish glee, while the great, gruff animal lay, with his nose resting on his paws, in the afternoon sunshine, as if he enjoyed the sport.

Lady Strathpey stood still for a moment, gazing on the lovely pastoral picture, the tears streaming over her wan cheeks. At last she drew near. The dog

raised his pointed ears, and uttered a hoarse growl. The countess panted in terror, but the boy's quick eyes had spied her.

"Down, Tiger," he cried, planting his brown, chubby foot on the animal's head, and the dog obeyed. "Come on," he continued, "him won't bite oo, him only bites de bad foxes."

Lady Strathpey approached, and held out her hand. "Have you forgotten me, Rommie?" she asked.

"No, indeed, I knows oo—oo comed wid other lady, long ago. Dat's my kid, Molly's kid; grannudder says it's my brudder—ain't it nice?" he replied, giving her one little hand, and pointing with the other towards the kid, which was cropping the green grass-blades a yard or two away.

She tried to answer, but her voice failed, the little, grating voice thrilled her to the heart's core. "Oh, my darling, my darling," she sobbed, catching the child in her arms and covering his face and hair with passionate kisses.

He struggled from her arms, looking up with wide, wondering eyes.

"What do make oo always ky?" he questioned, a trifle impatiently; "Rommie don't like folks to ky."

"Don't you, darling?" said the countess, restraining her tears; "then I'll not cry any more, for I want you to like me. Don't you like me, Rommie?"

"Oh, yes, Rommie likes oo, an' he likes grannudder, an' grannappa, an' Molly, lots and lots."

"Who is Molly?"

"Molly's my goat—my mammy goat—don't oo want to see her?"

"Not now, I'll see her by-and-bye; sit here by me, and let's talk a little bit. Where's grannmother?"

"Looking supper. We's doing to have tustard pie—oo want some?"

Lady Strathpey nodded, and took his little, round right arm in her hands with a beating heart, almost fearing to look for the birth-mark, yet feeling sure it was there.

"Won't you let me see your pretty arm?" she asked.

"Yes, indeed! Does oo want to see my pretty koss too?—look a there now!" he cried, pushing up the loose sleeve of his smock.

There it was! The Strathpey birth-mark, the scarlet cross, deep and vivid beneath the white, transparent skin!

For an instant the sunlit peaks, and all the green valley, swam before the poor mother's eyes, but by a mighty effort she controlled herself.

"Little Rommie," she said, solemnly, clasping the boy close to her heart, "you are my own child, and as sure as I live, and Heaven helps me, you shall be your father's heir."

CHAPTER XVIII.

On this selfsame afternoon Lord Strathpey, being unable to procure even so much as a saddle-horse, walked across the country to the shepherd's cottage. He was very weak and his head pained him badly, but the fierce unrest at his heart was worse by far than any bodily suffering. He was determined to find out the truth. He would never go back without it. Yet in the very height of his jealous determination he felt angered at his own folly in suffering such a groundless suspicion to take possession of him.

He reached the coppice, and, turning sharply round its corner, came all of a sudden upon a carriage, and Colonel Gilbert Vernon strolling up and down in front of it. The two men recognized each other on the instant, and after one short breath of surprise raised their hats in mutual salutation.

The earl strode on and Colonel Vernon took out his cigar and looked after him, growing a shade paler beneath his Indian bronze in his pity for the poor countess, who, he felt sure, was being pursued by her irate husband.

"What in the deuce brings him here, I wonder?" muttered Lord Strathpey as he hurried on.

Half way across the meadow the group beneath the oak attracted his attention. Something in the graceful outlines of the woman's figure struck a chill of deathly fear through his heart. He paused, irresolute for the moment whether to go on or not.

The picture before him was one of wondrous beauty—the great, far-spreading tree, the emerald turf, the graceful figure of the kneeling woman, and the little Alpine foundling, in his scarlet smock and jaunty cap, standing between his two companions, the grim sheep-dog and the young kid.

Even in his suspense and dumb, incomprehensible dread of he knew not what Lord Strathpey felt a thrill of admiration; and in after years—ah, years of bitter sorrow too—he had but to close his eyes and

the lovely pastoral scene arose before him, framed as it was by the blue peaks of the Alps.

He stood like one in a dream, watching the woman's passionate gestures. He saw her clasp the boy to her breast and kiss and caress him; he even caught a faint echo of her unrestrained sobs.

Presently she arose to her feet and turned her face towards him; and the Earl of Strathpey whitened to the very hue of death, for it was the face of his own wife!

For one brief moment he was lost in utter bewilderment, unable to believe what he saw with his own eyes. Then a sudden thought burst upon him. He remembered the waiting carriage and the waiting colonel round the corner of the coppice.

"Oh, Heaven!" he groaned, "it is she. It is all true. Her companion. Her old lover! The villain! he shall die for it!"

The words seemed to him through his set teeth, his face was ghastly to look upon, his eyes gleamed with a rage that bordered on madness. Turning on his heel, he strode back towards the coppice, and the countess in her excitement over the child had no suspicion of his presence.

Colonel Gilbert Vernon was pacing up and down before his carriage, evidently ill at ease, yet puffing at his cigar in an eminently stoical manner, when the earl burst like an enraged wild beast upon him.

"You unprincipled coward," he cried, catching the officer by the collar, "did you bring my wife hither or not? Answer me!"

The colonel was a cool, brave man, one who rarely ever lost command of his temper. He caught the earl's hand in a grasp that seemed like steel and removed it quietly from his collar.

"Now, my lord," he said, calmly, "have the goodness to reserve your epithets and hold in your temper, and we may be able to come to an understanding."

"Did you bring my wife to this place?" thundered Lord Strathpey.

"I took charge of her from Dover, at which place I found her ill and unprotected," answered the colonel; "and," he continued, in a conciliating tone, "for her sake I entreat you to be calm, and listen to what I have to say."

"You took charge of her from Dover, did you?" cried the irate peer. "What business have you taking charge of my wife, you unprincipled villain? What is she here for? Answer me, or it shall cost you your life!"

The colonel smiled quietly, but his gray eyes were beginning to blaze. He was not the man to brook abuse or insult.

"You must ask your countess what brings her hither," he replied. "Tis no affair of mine; yet for her sake and the respect I bear her I'll add that her object and her motive are alike pure and good."

"You speak falsely!" stormed the earl, absolutely foaming with rage. "No good wife would indulge in such an escapade as this. You say what is not true, and you are a coward, Gilbert Vernon; and I tell you this to your teeth!"

"Take care, my lord!" said the colonel, with an ominous flash in his steel-like eyes.

"Take care of what? Do you think I fear you, you sneaking coward?"

"Lord Strathpey, you shall answer for your words," returned the colonel, in his still-calm tones. "Not even for your wife's sake will I bear with such insults as this."

"My wife's sake!" gasped Lord Strathpey. "Oh, you sneaking bound, you shall pay dearly for this! Name the hour and place and I'll put a bullet through your cowardly heart. You a soldier? Pah! I'll have you drummed out of your regiment!"

A slow crimson was rising in the Indian officer's bronzed cheeks, and his eyes shone like fire.

"Very well, my lord," he replied, "when we meet again all this shall be settled."

"So it shall," retorted the almost insane husband as he strode away. "I'll settle it fast enough by blowing your brains out. I'll do it now if I only had a weapon. Go yonder, and fetch away your paramour," he continued, pointing over his shoulder towards the oak beneath which his unconscious wife still sat. "She is no wife of mine. From this hour I renounce her for ever. You may take her and welcome, but it shall cost you your heart's blood!"

"Lord Strathpey," uttered the colonel, making a step forward, his face expressing the anxiety he felt, not for himself, but for the woman upon whom these consequences would fall so heavily, "you are labouring under a great mistake."

But the earl motioned him back with a savage gesture, and disappeared round the coppice, reeling at every step; and before he had proceeded for the space of half a mile he fell, as if a bullet had struck him, face downward on the green sward of the Tyrol valley.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE sun had dropped out of sight, and the dusky mantle of twilight hung over the Alpine summits before the Countess of Strathpey returned to the spot where Colonel Vernon awaited her.

The officer was smoking fiercely and growing desperately impatient, yet his sphinx-like face was cool and smiling, and his manner the very perfection of thoroughbred politeness. He gave the lady one keen glance as she approached him, and made up his mind that she had not seen her husband, and knew nothing of his having followed her; and he concluded not to enlighten her, but to get her on her homeward route, and leave her to settle it with the earl as best she could.

He sighed, and his eyes softened as he looked down on her fragile, child-like beauty. How he had loved her once!

Now she had not power to stir his heart, save with a brother's tender pity.

He was thoroughly in love with his brilliant fiancée, Miss Julia Beresford, independent of her ten thousand a year.

Lady Strathpey's face was flushed and eager, and she clutched a little package in both hands, as if it were an invaluable treasure.

"Well, Lady Strathpey," said the colonel as he handed her into the vehicle, "I trust you have met with success."

"The child is mine, Colonel Vernon," she replied, solemnly; "he has the Strathpey birth-mark on his right arm—he is my child, my babe that was stolen from me."

"I have no doubt of it, madam, but I'm afraid you'll find it difficult to prove it," replied the colonel; "the other boy you say has the birth-mark too?"

"Yes, he has! That is the only thing I cannot account for. Poor little boy, I am very fond of him, and he shall always be as my own," she said, with emotion; "but my own boy, in the valley yonder, Lord Strathpey's true son, shall be his heir."

"But, my dear lady," continued the colonel as they sped along through the deepening twilight, "how do you purpose bringing this about? Have you sufficient proofs to convince your husband, and establish the child's claims?"

"I have the child's clothes," she said, clasping the little package to her bosom, "the same he had on when they found him under the milch-goat. Only a plain slip and a quilted flannel cloak, but I thought I would take them."

"I hope you'll succeed, but really it looks very doubtful," responded the practical colonel.

"I know it does—but Heaven will help me, colonel. It sent me to my child, and I shall look to it for help and direction. I never will abandon my purpose, never while I have life and reason. My boy shall be his father's heir, if it cost me my life and happiness."

Her pale face glowed in the twilight with the light of inspiration and deathless determination.

Colonel Vernon regarded her with admiring wonder.

"I beg your pardon, Lady Strathpey," he said, at last; "but I am older than you, and wiser in experience—allow me to advise you to tell your husband everything as soon as you meet him—concealment between man and wife is like playing with edged tools."

"Yes," she responded; "but I want to spare my dear husband all the anxiety and suspense I can. As soon as I can see my way clear—"

"But you may cause him far deeper anxiety in regard to yourself in the meantime," interrupted the officer; "he may misconstrue your motives and actions."

She turned upon him, her blue eyes blazing in the gloom.

"Misconstrue my actions? What do you mean, Colonel Vernon? My husband does not mistrust me, would not, under any circumstances. How dare you insinuate such an impossibility?"

"I beg your pardon; you will see one day that I am right, and have your welfare at heart. And now, are we to find lodgings for the night, or to start on our journey at once?"

"Oh, start at once by all means," cried the countess; "we have not a moment to lose; I must get home before my husband returns from London."

"Poor thing," sighed the colonel, "it will be a cruel blow."

They proceeded at once into France, and, having seen her ladyship safely on board the Dover steamer, Colonel Vernon went on to Paris to see his friend, wishing in his inmost heart that his friend had been at the Antipodes before he sent the message that caused him to start on such an ill-starred journey.

The countess reached Sevenoaks before the arrival of her husband, and found her household all in good order and her guests making themselves comfortable.



[THE STORM BREAKS.]

She felt intensely thankful, and occupied the following day in making out a concise statement concerning the child she believed to be her own, to be put into the hands of Sir Henry Galloway, her solicitor.

She was very determined, and very anxious to have the matter investigated at the earliest moment.

Pondering over Colonel Vernou's advice, she concluded at last to tell her husband everything, and if possible to enlist his sympathies and co-operation.

But her husband did not return! A week went by! Another followed, and still he was absent! The shooting season was famous, but the earl's friends began to think that their host was treating them rather shabbily, and one by one they took their flight.

The countess grew anxious and telegraphed to London, and to her utter consternation she learned that the earl had not been seen there. She telegraphed a second time, to his club address, and to his sister, Lady Neville, with no better success. It was evident that the earl had not been in London.

The poor wife's anxiety knew no bounds. She forgot her child and everything else in her fear for the husband she loved so well, and she was just on the point of starting for London herself to learn what had become of him when he all at once made his appearance.

Judith met him in the hall on his first arrival, and stood still in wondering horror. No grave-yard ghost ever looked more ghastly.

Recovering her wits in an instant, and divining that something terrible had befallen him, she fled like the wind to her lady's chamber. The countess was reading, or making a pretence to do so, but she looked up as Judith entered.

"Well, what is it?" she questioned, seeing in the girl's face that she brought some intelligence.

"My lady, Lord Strathspey has come."

The countess sprang to her feet.

"Oh, thank Heaven," she cried, "where is he, where is my dear husband?"

She was about to rush out in search of him in her joy, but Judith caught at her arm.

"One moment, my lady," she implored; "I think my lord is ill—or—something has happened—don't go just yet."

But the anxious wife shook her off.

"Is he ill? Stand out of my way, Judith; let me go to him!"

She freed herself from the girl's detaining hands and turned towards the door again, and there, face to face, she met her husband!

For the space of a moment they stood silent, looking into each other's eyes; the earl's hair was dishevelled,

his garments soiled, and his face so white and emaciated that his eyes looked out from their sunken sockets like balls of fire.

"Oh, Angus, my darling!" gasped the poor wife at last, putting out her trembling arms to embrace him, "what is this? what has changed you so?"

The sound of her voice seemed to rouse him into an insane fury. When she would have clasped his neck he hurled her back with a force that sent her reeling to the other side of the room.

"Don't come near me again, don't touch me," he burst out, panting for breath in his anger and weakness, "or I shall forget that you are a woman and the mother of my children. What has changed me? Don't you know, can't you guess, false, fair-faced deceiver? What could make a man what I am to-day but the shameful deceit and treachery of his wife?"

The poor countess shivered with terror, believing that her husband was utterly insane. She retreated into a corner of the room and put forth her hand to grasp the bell-ropes. But he darted upon her like a wild beast, and, seizing her by the shoulders, forced her down into a seat.

"Don't shiver and tremble, poor, guilty coward," he cried, standing over her with his white, awful face. "I'll not harm you—I couldn't do that—I couldn't harm a hair of your head, although you have dragged me and my proud name down into the dust and made me an alien and an outcast for all time to come."

"Angus!"

"Silence. I won't hear one word from your false lips! Listen to what I have to say, for after this hour I never mean to look upon your face again—you have broken my heart—the heart that loved you," he continued, with a sudden outbreak of tenderness. "Oh, Marguerite, how could you, how could you play me false?"

He sank into a seat, and, burying his face in his hands, shook and sobbed like a child in his weakness. His wife arose, and creeping to his side stole her arms about his neck; but their soft touch seemed to madden him.

"No, no!" he cried, hurling her off again; "I'm not to be cajoled and deceived any longer. That time's past. You deceived me in the very hour I made you my wife. You belonged to him then! You were the mother of his child! And now the moment he comes back from India you fly to his arms. False, abandoned, shameless woman."

Some little comprehension of the true cause of her husband's apparent insanity began to dawn upon the bewildered mind of the countess.

She arose, her lithe, slender figure seeming at least

a foot taller, a fiery spot smouldering on each waxen cheek, and her blue eyes beginning to blaze and glitter.

"Lord Strathspey," she said, her voice icily calm, "you are my husband, but you shall not insult me!"

The earl broke into a mocking laugh.

"Insult you," he cried, bitterly—"you who, taking advantage of your husband's absence, go strolling out of England with your old lover. You didn't know I followed you, madam! I did, though. I saw you sitting under the oak crying over your bastard son. I know now why you have always treated my son with such unwomanly indifference. I was within a stone's throw of you all the while, and saw your gallant colonel awaiting you in the copse. False, false woman! I believe now that you were cognizant of the disappearance of my babe on the night of his birth. You wanted no other son beside your pet in the Tyrol."

Lady Strathspey stood like marble, never answering a word.

"I can understand now," continued the earl, the whole thing seeming to grow clearer and indisputable, "why you were so anxious to travel, and why you sent so many packages to your brother in India. Brother, indeed! What a blind idiot I have been! But my eyes are open now. For two weeks and more I have been lying at death's door in the Tyrol. I should have died, I think, but for my children. I could not leave them to their shameless mother," he went on. "I am here now to make my final arrangements. I shall give them—my boy and girl, I mean—to Lady Neville, my sister, with the understanding that you are never to set eyes on them again. The day after to-morrow I shall meet your gallant colonel and put a bullet through his heart; then I shall leave England for ever."

"I shall leave you an annuity sufficient to keep you from want," he added, turning back in the doorway; "and from this hour I hope never to hear your name or look upon your face again neither in this world nor in the world to come!"

He strode out, giving one backward glance, and that glance beheld her still standing erect and statue-like, her face all aglow with outraged innocence, her clear, sunless eyes full of fiery indignation, yet melting with tenderness for the husband who had so foully wronged her.

In the after years of his wanderings—and bitter, remorseful years they were—the remembrance of her face as he last saw it haunted the earl like an avenging Nemesis.

(To be continued.)



MARIGOLD.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"The Image in the Heart," "Sweet Eglantine,"
"The Three Passions," &c., &c.

CHAPTER XXI.

His changing cheek, his sinking heart confess
The might, the majesty of loveliness!
Such was Zuleika—such around her shone
The nameless charms unmarked by her alone;
The light of love, the purity of grace,
The mind, the music, breathing from her face,
The heart whose softness harmonized the whole,
And, oh! that eye was in itself a soul! *Byron.*

At last Frank Anglesey and Marigold were made happy. Their suffering was over, their mutual misery was at an end, and their sorrow was crowned with a bliss so perfect that in the nature of worldly affairs it could not last.

They were married privately in Venice, and retired to the castle which Captain Anglesey had purchased in the vicinity.

Here they lived in peace and contentment, their only companion being Mrs. Henderson, who really loved Marigold, and could not have borne a separation from her.

The death of Lord Kimbolton had been a severe blow to her, but she soon forgot it when she saw the renewed health which her niece enjoyed, and she rejoiced in the happiness she beheld around her.

Never were two human beings so thoroughly wrapped up in one another. They made their own world. They did not wish for society, and the will of each was entirely submissive to that of the other.

Months glided by. Anglesey's tenderness for Marigold if possible increased, and he devoted himself more and more to her. An observer would have said that they were lovers in the first stage of their courtship.

The past was forgotten, they lived in the present and thought little of the future.

Marigold was so lovely, her disposition was so sweet, her temper so angelic, that no man could have been blessed with a better wife.

She spent her income and occupied her spare time in relieving the necessities of those poor people who lived in the vicinity of the castle.

Every one called her an angel, and blessings were invoked upon her head wherever she was seen or her name mentioned.

More than six months passed. Captain Anglesey died more than love his wife—he adored, he worshipped her, and his adoration was almost if not quite sinful.

[THE MAJOR ON THE TRACK.]

Now and then he had to visit Venice for the transaction of business.

It was during one of these occasions that he met Doctor Dawson, who, to his great surprise, was staying at the same hotel as himself.

"My dear doctor," he exclaimed, extending his hand, "I am pleased to meet you, although you were always more the friend of Kimbolton than you were of me."

"You have a friend, if I mistake not, sir," replied Doctor Dawson, coldly. "I mean Mr. Wilfred Marshall, who has aided you on all occasions."

"Oh, yes. But Marshall has gone to England to attend to his private affairs. I have lost Marshall for a time; however, Mrs. Henderson is with us. She also Marigold will be pleased to receive a visit from you, if you will favour us. There is a great change in my wife's health. You would scarcely know her again."

"I am rejoiced to hear that," replied Doctor Dawson. "But I must be frank with you. We—that is to say you and I—cannot meet on friendly ground."

"Indeed; and why not?"

"Well, the fact is—I don't want to be offensive, you know, Captain Anglesey," said the doctor, in some confusion.

"I feel certain, Doctor Dawson, that you are far too gentlemanly a man to say anything which would be unnecessarily harsh or rude," Anglesey hastened to say.

"Thank you for that. Well, I suppose I may tell you all I have in my mind. It was our intention to visit the Eagle's Nest where you reside, and—"

"Our!" repeated Anglesey. "May I inquire who your companion is? I am not in the habit of receiving every one who calls upon me."

"Certainly. It is Major Sanders—one of the old-fashioned sort of fire-eating army men—an extraordinary man I do assure you. The way in which he spoke to an Austrian officer who was rude to me at the table d'hôte yesterday was quite a spirited thing—it was indeed."

"Sanders," said Captain Anglesey, thoughtfully. "There was a man of that name in the Eleventh Hussars. I met him at Bangalore when I was in India."

"The same."

"Is he not some relation of the late Lord Kimbolton?" continued Anglesey, contracting his brows.

"Yes—a first cousin; and that brings me to the cause of our journey. There has been a good deal of talk in England about Kimbolton's death. People have canvassed the matter; and, as you married the widow so soon afterwards, it has been

whispered at the clubs that you know more about the attack on the gondola than any one else."

"You dare to say that to my face!" cried Captain Anglesey, making a threatening movement, which caused the doctor to retreat.

"My dear, good sir," said Doctor Dawson, "I entreat you to be calm. What did the royal physician say to Queen Elizabeth when she had the tooth-ache—"

"Go on. I did not mean to alarm you," replied Anglesey, controlling himself by a violent effort.

"It is your own wish that I should explain the reason why Major Sanders and I have undertaken a journey to Venice," the doctor went on. "Don't be offended with me for my candour. Sanders says he doesn't believe Kimbolton is dead at all. I tell him that's all nonsense, because we found the body and I saw it buried. Then he says if Kimbolton is dead you killed him or had a hand in it; and he will not rest till he has avenged his kinsman's death."

"So," said Captain Anglesey, with a half-smile, "you and Major Sanders have come out like a couple of amateur detectives to unmask an imaginary assassin?"

"Precisely; though as to it being imaginary I must say I think there is a great deal of force in the arguments that Sanders advances. However, you see now that we cannot meet as friends, so perhaps we had better treat one another as strangers. Oh, here is the major; he has come at an opportune moment."

They had entered a small room used for reading and smoking, which ran out of the hall, and it was here that Major Sanders found them. He was a tall, stout, red-faced, plethoric-looking man, about fifty years of age. His hair was slightly tinged with gray, which gave him a venerable appearance. His manner was important, if not fussy, and he was evidently one of those who believed that his mission in life was to domineer over others.

There are some officers who though they leave the service never forget the habits they have acquired in it, and are in a state of perpetual duty, regarding those around them as full privates to be ordered hither and thither and to obey and salute at all times. Major Sanders was one of those.

"Ah, doctor!" he exclaimed; "who's your friend? May I have the honour of an introduction?"

"Dear me; this is awkward," said Dawson. "I—I—upon my word I don't know how to—"

Anglesey stepped forward and relieved the worthy doctor from his embarrassment by exclaiming:

"I have no wish to make your acquaintance, since

Dawson has informed me why you are here; but, if my name will gratify you, hear it. I am Captain Anglesey, and the husband of the once Lady Kimbolton."

"The deuce you are, sir!" cried Major Sanders, becoming redder than ever. "I don't know why Doctor Dawson should hold any communication with you, for your presence here is an impertinence."

"I have yet to learn what right you have to forbid me to enter a public hotel," replied Anglesey.

"I, sir, will waste no words with you!" exclaimed the major. "You wear the mask of the assassin, and, with Heaven's help, we will tear it from your cowardly face!"

"You say that which is not true," exclaimed Anglesey, becoming pale. "I presume your words relate to the death of Lord Kimbolton, and—"

"I have already said that I will not hold any conversation with you. A man of your antecedents is not a fit companion for honest folks. You have been in prison."

"That is an old story," replied Captain Anglesey, with a bitter smile. "However I do not wish to quarrel with you. Lord Kimbolton's sudden death was peculiar and mysterious. I had everything to gain by his decease, and, on calm consideration, I cannot blame you who are his kinsman for indulging injurious suspicions respecting me; time will show you your error. At present I only wish to be allowed to use this hotel as freely as any other visitor who has occasion to stay in it. Doctor Dawson will tell you that I had no wish to intrude myself upon him. Leave me alone, and you may depend upon it I shall not molest you."

"I am deeply grieved to think that we cannot meet as of old and extend the hand of friendship and good-fellowship," said the doctor; "but circumstances alter cases, and as Queen Elizabeth said when she had the toothache—"

"Thank you for your good opinion, doctor," replied Captain Anglesey. "The time may come when we shall grasp each other's hands in amity—till then farewell! As for you, Major Sanders, I have held her majesty's commission, and any repetition of the insults you have favoured me with to-day will compel me to demand satisfaction."

"Which you will not obtain, sir. Gentlemen do not fight with convicted thieves," replied the major, coldly.

"Then I will strike you as I would a dog, and the injury will be on your side. Beware how you anger me too far. I go. Do not cross my path if you value your life!"

"Just what I expected," remarked Major Sanders as Anglesey stalked proudly from the room. "The fellow talks like a bandit. There is no doubt he killed poor Kimbolton."

"Have you made any discovery?" asked Doctor Dawson.

"Not much worth talking about. It appears that the chief gondolier of the funeral-looking gondola which attacked that of Kimbolton is a man named Guiseppe. I have ascertained that, and this Guiseppe is at present major domo at the Eagle's Nest, where Anglesey is living."

"That is an important fact," said the doctor.

"Very much so indeed. It shows that Anglesey was connected with this mysterious gondola which was always following Kimbolton about."

"Can you obtain an order for the arrest of Guiseppe?" asked the doctor.

"No, I cannot. The police here will not help us. They laugh at the idea of M. Anglesey as they call him being concerned in the outrage, and it is my firm opinion that he has wished them heavily to do nothing."

"Quite possible. He has the command of any amount of money, and the Austrian police, I have heard, are to be bought at a very low price."

"What remains for us?" said Major Sanders.

"We must be our own police."

"With what end in view?"

"I will tell you. It appears from what I heard from a subordinate officer at the police office that when the body supposed to have been Lord Kimbolton was found and exhibited to the public for purposes of identification a woman came forward and declared that it was that of her husband, whom she had reason to believe committed suicide. She pointed out certain marks on the body which ought to have been conclusive, but the clothes were those of Kimbolton and certain articles of value were his, so that the police drove the woman away and would not listen to her story."

"Ah!" exclaimed Doctor Dawson as a light began to dawn upon him. "You think that Kimbolton is not dead after all?"

"Just so."

"What then has become of him?"

"That is another question. Anglesey wanted him out of the way. He had a deep debt of vengeance to pay. He had also to remove him because he stood between him and his false wife Marigold."

"Pardon me," said the doctor. "Lady Kimbolton was a model of virtue."

"Bah!" exclaimed Major Sanders. "There is a virtue of the heart which husbands prize most, and she was a traitress to Kimbolton in her heart."

"Well, what is your theory?"

"I believe that Kimbolton is at this moment a prisoner in some dungeon in this castle called the Eagle's Nest."

"Preposterous," said Doctor Dawson.

"Not at all. Anglesey was too much of a coward to kill him, or else he wished to make him suffer as much agony as he could. If you kill your enemy the pain is momentary and he may be in heaven the next minute. Where is the gain? If you confine him in a loathsome dungeon and keep him on bread and water you have a decided advantage over murder."

"So you have."

"There are sixty seconds in each minute and sixty minutes in every hour, there are twelve hours in a day, and so on. Well, as the years roll on the man dies every day, so complicated and prolonged is his agony."

"I agree with you, and am convinced that a clever man like Anglesey is more likely to make a prisoner of an enemy than to kill him."

"And what more likely place to confine him in than this old fortress called the Eagle's Nest? I have seen it."

"When?" demanded Doctor Dawson, astonished at the progress his friend had made in his inquiries.

"This morning. I was driven over there. It is quite worthy of the age of feudalism. There is a moat with a drawbridge. Unless you scale the walls it is impossible to obtain an entrance, but I, with the eye of an old soldier, have hit upon a means of gaining access to the castle if necessary."

"How, and what good will result from your attempting such a thing?"

"I can scarcely tell at present," replied Major Sanders, "though I made the most of my time, and have the wife of the drawbridge keeper in my pay. Always get hold of the wife if you want to do anything you think the husband will not consent to."

Doctor Dawson laughed.

"You are not so far wrong," he replied. "But tell me, I beg, what you intend to do."

"It is easily told. I mean to-night to go to the Eagle's Nest and gain admittance through the agency of the woman of whom I have spoken."

"And then—"

"Well, the rest depends upon fortune. I am aware that the enterprise is somewhat risky, yet I have hope. The country people speak of a ghost on the terrace which utters unearthly cries in the night. Perhaps there is a dungeon under the terrace, and in this our old friend Kimbolton is languishing."

"It is possible but not probable," answered Doctor Dawson. "Shall I accompany you? I am not a good hand at fighting, still if a blow is to be struck—"

"Stay where you are, my dear doctor," said Major Sanders. "You are one of the most estimable of men. You would be a loss to society, whereas I am only a rough, blunt soldier and am assumed to face danger. If I do not return to-morrow you can apprise the police; tell them whether I went and what my object was. At least, you can avenge me."

"Certainly, rely upon me," answered the doctor, who was much relieved when the services he proffered with considerable diffidence were dispensed with.

That evening Major Sanders, the cousin of Lord Kimbolton, started for the Eagle's Nest, where resided Captain Anglesey and his darling wife.

His theory was a wild one, but he was a passionate, self-willed, and daring man. Few things had any terror for him. He loved danger for its own sake, and had in the Crimean War obtained the Victoria Cross for an act of conspicuous but almost foolhardy daring.

He was fully persuaded that Lord Kimbolton was not dead. He thought Captain Anglesey had carried him off and condemned him to a life-long imprisonment in a dungeon, so that he could induce his widow to become his wife.

The idea was romantic, and most people would have laughed at it as Doctor Dawson was inclined to do, yet he fully believed in it, and with the madness peculiar to his nature determined to make an effort to explore the ancient castle which from its prominent position on the rock was called the Eagle's Nest.

CHAPTER XXII.

I am going, Annie, darling, I am going to the war.

And in may be, Annie, darling, that you'll never see me more.

The architecture of the more venerable portion of the Eagle's Nest could be traced as far back as the fourteenth century, but many modern additions had been made to supplement and arrest the natural progress of decay.

Inside the walls was a splendid terrace, covered

with large trees, and it was from this portion of the castle that the country people declared they heard strange cries and beheld mysterious if not supernatural appearances.

Major Sanders obtained admission to this part of the building by means of the wife of the drawbridge keeper.

He pleaded curiosity as his motive and a wish to enjoy the beautiful view of the fertile valley below.

He knew that Captain Anglesey was still detained in Venice, and that only Mrs. Henderson and Marigold were at the castle.

It was evening.

The setting sun cast fantastic shadows among the ancient trees and on the walls and battlements.

Suddenly Major Sanders saw a man, whom from the description he had obtained of him he imagined to be the gondolier Guiseppe, who had been principally concerned in the attack upon Kimbolton.

Peering behind a tree, the major watched this man narrowly.

He carried in his hand a loaf of bread and a pitcher of water.

A few yards from the major was a large opening in the earth in the shape of a parallelogram.

Against a tree stood a ladder. Disengaging this the man let it descend the hole in the earth until only a few inches remained above the surface.

Then he went down the cavern by means of the ladder in a manner that showed he was used to such a task. First he took with him the bread, and returned for the water, neither of which he brought back.

In a few minutes he reappeared and placed the ladder in its former position, looked carefully round as if to see whether he had been remarked by any one, and retraced his steps to the castle wall, entering the building through a small postern of which he had the key.

Major Sanders waited until he was out of sight, and then emerged from his place of seclusion. He had followed the man's actions with the liveliest curiosity, and, advancing to the mouth of the cavern, he looked carefully down it.

In some blocks of smooth stone were placed iron railings to prevent any one from falling into what appeared to be the mouth of a huge cistern, which had been scooped out of the solid rock and was more than half full of water.

The well-like hole which conducted to the water was smooth and perpendicular, so that a rat could not have clung to its surface.

To assure himself that it really was water the major dropped a stone into the cistern—a hollow splash rewarded his efforts.

He had seen the ladder put down the mouth, and the man had taken the bread and water with him when he descended the shaft. It was scarcely possible that he would throw them away, and if not there must be some cavernous recess in which he had placed them.

Being of an adventurous disposition, the major thought he was on the eve of some important discovery, and determined to make use of the ladder as best he might.

Accordingly he lowered it until he felt it strike upon a ledge of rock, and he descended the spokes one by one with the utmost caution.

A chill rose from the water, which penetrated to his bones, and when his hands came in contact with the walls he withdrew them covered with a damp shiver.

When he reached the projecting slab on which the ladder rested he fancied he could see an opening in the side of the rock above the level of the water.

By dint of going on his hands and knees he crept round the foot of the ladder and found himself as he had imagined in a cavern, admission to which was only gained through the mouth of the cistern, and from which it was impossible to escape except by a ladder, as the slipping and perpendicular sides of the shaft rendered it out of the question to attempt to reach the top by their aid.

The cistern or reservoir was an indispensable work in such a building as the Eagle's Nest, for it contained the water which supplied the inmates, and was forced up by machinery every other day.

All at once Major Sanders heard a footstep grate on the gravel over his head, an exclamation as of annoyance was uttered, and immediately the ladder was pulled up from the ledge.

His hair rose up, and a heavy perspiration broke out all over him.

His only mode of escape was cut off. He was in the entrance to a most artfully constructed and cleverly concealed dungeon, which for all he knew might be his prison or his tomb.

It was possible that Captain Anglesey had returned from Venice, and in going along the terrace had seen the ladder, which he withdrew, blaming the carelessness of Guiseppe, which had allowed it to remain there.

The fading rays of the setting sun were faintly refracted from the water of the cistern and enabled the major to see that the loaf of bread and jar of water were untouched.

But they were not long to remain so, a sound of breathing came from the interior of the cavern and a footstep was audible.

The major leant against the wall and waited. Something brushed against him, and a voice demanded:

"Who are you?"

For a moment Major Sanders had yielded to a superstitious feeling, which the surroundings certainly encouraged, but when he heard a human voice speak he knew that he had not to deal with a denizen of the other world.

"Unfortunately," he replied, "I am a prisoner, as I imagine you to be."

"Another victim," said the voice.

"I am to blame for my situation," continued the major, "for I have run into danger through my devotion to my old friend and relative Lord Kimbolton, whom I expected to find concealed in this castle, and I should have thought you were he were not your voice different in tone to what his was."

"Who are you that take an interest in Lord Kimbolton?" asked the unknown. "Do not all the world believe him dead?"

"I for one do not, and I am Major Sanders."

The next instant the major found his hand warmly grasped by the unknown.

"Forgive me for not revealing myself sooner," he said, "but I fancied you were an enemy sent by my jailer, Captain Anglesey. I am that unhappy man who was once the rich and powerful Kimbolton. You remember very well. Your presence here is a mystery to me, though I have no doubt we shall find our mutual explanations interesting. Come with me into the interior of this cavern, where it is dryer and not so cold. I have a lamp in the chamber I inhabit, though as my allowance of oil is limited, and only given me at rare intervals, I economize it, and can find my way about in the dark pretty well."

He took up the bread and water, and led the way along a spacious gallery until he reached a circular walled chamber.

The grating of a match on the wall preceded a flash of light, which was communicated to a small oil-lamp.

Some pieces of detached rock were utilized as table and chair, and a heap of straw in a corner served as a bed.

"This is a rough place for a nobleman who could a year ago command everything money could buy or a cultivated taste suggest," exclaimed the captive. "But I have never in my deepest misery despaired. It always seemed to me that the day of deliverance would come."

"You have a companion in misfortune," replied the major, "for I cannot for the life of me imagine how we are to get of this ingeniously constructed prison. The ladder which I reckoned upon for my retreat has been taken away."

"Am I much altered?" Do you recognize me as Kimbolton?" asked the prisoner.

"It is some years since I have seen you, yet I cannot disguise the fact that your confinement has added greatly to your age. Your hair is white."

"White! Have I then suffered so deeply?"

"You have indeed. Your eyes are sunken, and your form emaciated. But I will not distress you by dwelling upon that. You will recover and be yourself again."

"How did you discover me?"

"By the merest accident in the world. Dr. Dawson gave me an account of your supposed death. I did not credit it. The fact of the face of the dead body being disfigured seemed to me suspicious."

"Did they find a body resembling me?" asked Lord Kimbolton.

"They did. I forgot that this was not familiar to you. It was dressed in your clothes, and had property belonging to you on it. The face was battered to such an extent as to render the features unrecognizable. This was said to be your body and was buried in Venice."

"Was the story of my death believed in London?" Did Dawson credit it?"

"He did at first, but after talking to me and hearing my views he changed his mind. It seemed to me that Anglesey had so much cause to hate you that he would consider sudden death too good for you," replied Major Sanders.

"You were right."

"I have always had a great affection for you. We were at Eton together, and when I was a young man just entering the service and struggling with debts you did me more than one kindness, so I resolved to explore the mystery, and if you were alive I would find you."

"And nobly you have kept your word. I can never thank you sufficiently, my dear cousin. If I do not overtake you with words of gratitude it is because my heart is too full and the sudden transi-

tion from death—a living death—to life has overcome me."

"Don't say a word," Major Sanders hastened to reply. "I understand your feelings thoroughly. Well, as I was explaining to you, Dawson and I banded ourselves together, and came out to Venice. The inquiries I made confirmed my suspicions that you were a prisoner in this castle, where Captain Anglesey is living with your wife."

"I thought as much," exclaimed Lord Kimbolton. "He has assured her of my death. She was only too glad to hear of it, and they have been married."

"Yes, Mrs. Henderson is living with them; but if we can escape from this cavern, you will have a splendid opportunity of revenge."

"My life shall be devoted to it, I swear it," replied Kimbolton, solemnly.

"I found," continued Major Sanders, "that Guiseppe, who was Anglesey's gondolier, was living here, and a trusted servant of Anglesey's. By bribing the wife of the keeper of the drawbridge I gained admittance to the castle on the plea of curiosity. While walking on the terrace I saw a man descend the mouth of the reservoir with bread and water. When he had gone I availed myself of his ladder, which remained against a tree, and descended. But just before you came up I was horrified to find the ladder withdrawn by some one, so that the only means of retracing my steps was taken away, and here am I—Major Sanders, officer on full pay—in one of the queerest positions I ever was in during my life. It resembles a chapter in a romance."

"Don't you know, my dear fellow," replied Lord Kimbolton, "that truth is stranger than fiction, and that some people live a life of romance?"

"I have found you," replied Sanders, "and that is sufficient to console me."

Let me exercise the hospitality of my dungeon. The bread and water are at your service," Kimbolton said, with a smile.

"Thank you, I dine at my hotel," answered Major Sanders.

"Then I will satisfy my appetite, for it is not often I get the opportunity, and while I am eating my fragrant meal you shall hear how I came to be entrapped."

He broke off a part of the loaf with his fingers and devoured it ravenously.

"I was returning from the theatre," he continued, "where I had been spending a few hours with an actress, and my gondola was attacked by another. I had entertained apprehension for some time that some foul play was intended me, owing to the fact of a black gondola continually following me. I was overpowered in an instant, being assaulted from behind, and when I recovered my senses I was in this cavern."

"The villains!" muttered the major.

"My attendant, if I may dignify him with the name, bound up my wound, which was not serious, and told me that I was condemned to a life-long captivity, that my detainer was Captain Anglesey, and that it would be useless to try to escape—an instant death would follow any attempt at insubordination. Fond of life, and longing for the day of vengeance, I have borne my lot with equanimity, instead of going mad as some would have done. Anglesey has triumphed, but I have had him on the hip, and let him beware of the future. That my wife has married him causes me little annoyance, for I have long ceased to love her."

"How are we to get out of this?" asked the major, looking round him dismally.

"I have an idea," answered Lord Kimbolton. "Being weak and ill, I could not put it in execution myself, but you can help me. Guiseppe will come to-morrow evening with my daily dole of bread and water. Let us lie in wait for and kill him if he resists, for we must have his ladder."

"An excellent idea, and one worthy of an old campaigner," exclaimed Major Sanders. "Do you know this reminds me of an adventure I had in India during the Sepoy rebellion. I'd tell it you if I did not feel so low-spirited; a little brandy now would be just the thing to enliven us. By Jove, I had a flask in my pocket. It is there now, and I had forgotten all about it."

The major produced a flask of brandy, which put new life into both of them.

He placed it on the piece of rock which served them as a table and said:

"A week ago I was at my club in Pall Mall, and I then little imagined I should be in the position in which I now find myself."

After a pause Lord Kimbolton said:

"I think we shall be able to seize Guiseppe to-morrow evening, then we shall have liberty before us. The treatment I have received has made me more embittered and hostile than before, if possible. Anglesey shall render an account to me, and pay it to the uttermost farthing."

"Will you punish him for unlawfully imprisoning you?"

"No; I shall attack him indirectly. If I prose-

cute him in this country I might not get a conviction."

"You will take Marigold away from him?"

"I may separate them, but she shall never come back to me," replied Lord Kimbolton. "The very sight of her would be more fatal to me than the poison of the Borgias."

"At least she does not know that you are alive and that you have suffered confinement in this place."

"I am willing to admit that, but I cannot tell yet what I shall do. My delight at the prospect of deliverance shuts out everything else," replied his lordship.

It was not to be wondered at that the fact of a friend finding him and coming to his assistance in a dungeon where at times he had fancied himself buried for life prevented him from thinking of anything else.

Captain Anglesey had contrived his revenge well. Lord Kimbolton now knew the miseries of solitary confinement even when not accompanied with the felon's dress and hard labour.

Some occupation for the mind would have been a relief. Work for the body would have been better than stagnation, and even the sight of a warder would have been better than nothing.

A night and a day had to pass before Guiseppe could be expected and they could put their plan into execution.

Major Sanders slept on the straw by the side of his old friend, and when he awoke he crawled to the edge of the cistern to discover by the aid of the rays of light whether day had broke.

The sun was shining brightly, and he could even hear the songs of the birds that hopped from bough to bough in the trees on the terrace.

The day passed in pleasant conversation between the two old friends. The shadow of death had passed from Kimbolton's soul, and he could talk cheerfully of the future.

As Major Sanders was the stronger and more vigorous of the two he stood at the entrance to the cavern when night fell.

At the usual time the tread of Guiseppe was heard overhead; the ladder came down and he descended.

No sooner had he placed his foot upon the ledge than Major Sanders seized him in a strong grasp. His hands tightened round his throat, and before the unfortunate man could offer any resistance he was cast headlong and half strangled into the water.

The immersion somewhat roused him from the effects of his rough treatment. He was just able to touch the edge of the projecting ledge with his fingers, but the major pushed him ruthlessly into the water again.

In a few minutes all was over.

Guiseppe sank like a drowned rat, and the captives were free to make their escape.

"Now, my friend, let us lose no time," said the major. "Follow me."

He ascended the ladder, and the next moment he and Lord Kimbolton were standing on the terrace, the cool breeze playing on their faces and their hearts beating with a consciousness of liberty.

Major Sanders knew the way to the drawbridge and hastily conducted his lordship thither. The porters met them at the gate, and was surprised at their appearance.

Putting some gold pieces into her hand, the major said:

"Open the gate, and say nothing. It will be best for you."

With a strange, affrighted glance she allowed them to pass, and they were quickly on their way to Venice, which they reached in a couple of hours.

Doctor Dawson was as delighted as he was astonished to behold Lord Kimbolton, and listened in silent wonderment to the story of his escape.

"My dear lord, I congratulate you most heartily," he said at the conclusion of the recital.

"My thanks are due to you, doctor, and my kind kinsman here. Those who have deserved it shall suffer, and those who have served me shall be rewarded."

"I must tell you," said the doctor, "that there is a grand fête to-morrow, in the garden of General Custozza, who is governor of the province. Captain Anglesey and his—ahem!—I suppose I must say his wife, will be there."

"And I will be there also," replied Lord Kimbolton.

A tailor and hairdresser speedily restored his lordship to his former appearance. His hair, which had turned white, was dyed; and, save that he was thinner and graver, there was little difference in his appearance.

Captain Anglesey little dreamt that his prisoner had escaped. He had doomed him to a life-long imprisonment in what he regarded as an undiscoverable prison, and when he thought of what he had himself endured it comforted him to think that the iron had entered into the soul of his enemy as it had into his own.

He had arranged to take Marigold to the fête given by the Austrian governor of the province on the morrow; but he did not guess that he would there meet with Lord Kimbolton, whom he imagined to be still writhing in captivity in the bosom of the solid rock.

Truly he had been wronged, but the revenge he had taken was inhuman.

He had to learn that this is a world of change, and that fortune can give her wheel a twist when it is least expected.

The fact of Lord Kimbolton being alive and at liberty was one of terrible significance to him.

Lord Kimbolton expressed a wish to his friends that they should not say anything about his imprisonment.

"I have no wish," he said, "to be regarded as a hero of romance. Let it be understood that I was attacked by brigands and so much hurt that I lay for months between life and death at a small house in a bye-street of Venice."

"Then you do not intend to prosecute Captain Anglesey for this unparalleled outrage on your person," remarked Doctor Dawson. "I am not going to say that you are taking a wrong course, because every one may be mistaken. For instance, the court physician, when her Most Gracious Majesty Queen Elizabeth had the toothache—"

"Yes, yes, doctor; we quite agree with you on that point," interrupted his lordship, with a faint smile.

"I have well considered the matter, however, and I shall take no action against him criminally. I have imprisoned him once and the operation will lose its novelty by repetition. It will be enough for him to know that I am alive and to see me to-morrow. I shall retake possession of my estates. You, doctor, shall be my physician with a salary of five hundred a year; and if a similar sum will be of use to you, with a few thousands into the bargain, my dear Sanders, you are more than welcome to them."

"My professional income is small, and I cheerfully accept your offer in the spirit in which it is made," replied the doctor. "But, my lord, if you could raise it to the same figure you have offered your cousin I should be delighted; for as Queen Elizabeth said to her physician on the former occasion, when she for three weeks had the—"

"Say no more, doctor; a thousand be it. Your presence and friendship are cheap at the price," replied his lordship.

"As for me, my dear Kimbolton," answered Major Sanders, "I will make no scruple of being glad of your money, although I did what I could for you without hope of reward; an army man living on his pay is never very rich, and I will draw upon your purse as far as your generosity will allow me, though I will promise not to overtax it."

"So be it. Keep my secret. I will settle my debt with Captain Anglesey in my own way."

"You'll not let him go scot free, I hope," replied Major Sanders.

Lord Kimbolton extended his right arm, saying: "May this hand wither before I forgive him one jot or one iota of the debt he owes me."

"That's right. That's the proper spirit to display."

"My dear Sanders," returned Lord Kimbolton. "There are various ways of avenging injuries. I have my own method. Let him and the woman who lives with him look to themselves. Anglesey has outraged me in an infamous manner. To you I am indebted for my liberty. My escape was little less than a miracle. But, being free, I will wring his heart till he kneels to me for mercy. His love for my wife is my gain. My wife do I say! I own her not. I cast her from me, yet shall she participate in the punishment of her paramour."

Lord Kimbolton spoke in a bitterly decided tone which is seldom if ever heard in the mouths of those who have not undergone great misery and suffering.

In such cases the heart seems turned to ice or iron, and the milk of human kindness is nothing but gall. Revenge with some people and under certain circumstances becomes a monomania.

It was so with Lord Kimbolton.

While he was threatening the future of Captain Anglesey and Marigold they were receiving each other's carresses in the latter's boudoir.

"Do you love me still as you did at first, darling?" she asked, looking into his face with passionate affection.

"More, dearest—more!" he replied.

"And if Kimbolton's relatives disapprove of our marriage you will never let them take me away from you?" she pleaded.

"Never, dear Marie, never! I would sooner part with my life."

But the cloud was even then overshadowing them and they knew it not.

(To be continued.)

A SPLENDID PRESENT.—The Sultan has sent the Empress Eugénie a magnificent sapphire, sur-

rounded by large brilliants. The value of this splendid jewel is over 3,000 guineas.

CROCODILE SHOOTING IN NORTH QUEENSLAND.

A CORRESPONDENT of a contemporary furnishes the following account of his experience in crocodile shooting:

"Strolling along the banks of the Pioneer River, about nine miles from its mouth at Mackay, in North Queensland, early in July, 1870, I caught a glimpse of a good-sized crocodile lying basking on a small spit of muddy sand projecting about twelve yards into the river, 100 yards ahead of me. Under the cover of a bank of sand and some brush tea-tree growing upon it I stalked within eighteen yards of him, and, aiming three inches behind his fore paw, gave him two bullets as quickly as I could, one after another, from a 12-gauge C.F. breech-loader (a smooth bore). He gave a lash with his tail and made a sound something between a grunt and a feeble roar, but, to my delight, did not move from the spot. I reloaded quickly, and walked out from my covert to within a few yards of him, when I found that though not dead he seemed paralyzed as to his fore legs, but still able to lash his tail with some force and raise his body up on his hind legs. Having wounded another in the same place a few days before, that had managed to scramble into the water, I still felt quite uncertain of bagging him; so, as I was in a better position to see it, being more over him, I took a shot at his eye, but allowing too much for the rise, made a bad one, hitting him just over the upper lip, which, of course, had no vital effect.

"This left me with only one more bullet, and as I could not tell whether he was more than stunned for the time, and I wanted to put him out of pain, I gave him a charge of No. 3 shot behind the shoulder. But this did not seem to affect him in the slightest, and I began to despair of being able to 'kill him intirely' at all; so, determined to have something to show, I tried to cut off one of the horry projections on his tail; however there was too much 'life in the old dog' for that, and he sent me spinning into the water. I then tried with my last bullet to hit the spine, and, standing close over him, fired straight down at the back of his neck. He did not move, so I thought I would try his mouth, which was wide open, as when I first saw him, and which he had kept open all the time. I got a piece of stick and put it well across his jaws, and freely confess that the crunch with which he came down upon it and the way he shook it startled me considerably; though he had scarcely any teeth he fairly crunched it to splinters.

"I had no knife with me large enough to make any deep impression, so I fired another charge of shot in behind his shoulder, and this, from being discharged so close, seemed nearly to finish him. I was now able to cut the last four inches of the tip of his tail, though he still had sufficient power to draw it several times out of my hand while I was doing it; but I think a good deal of this movement must have been merely muscular action, without the animal having any feeling left in him.

"I rode out on the following day with a string to measure him, and found him lying quite dead, exactly as I had left him; in fact he had never moved from the spot where I first saw and shot him. From the tip of the nose to the tip of the tail he was 15 ft. 3 in., and his girth just in front of the hind legs was 6 ft.; his skull, which I have kept, measured 2 ft. 2 in. long without the skin, and 14 in. in widest part. I found on examination that he had been shot before; two bullets had broken away a large piece of the bone just above the right eye and between it and the temple, but had failed to strike the small cavity that contains the brain. As far as I could make out he had been shot once before by a neighbour, Mr. C. E. Romilly, who has been very destructive amongst the crocodiles on the Pioneer, having killed some fourteen in the last eighteen months, varying in size from 15 ft. down to a baby of some 20 in. . . .

"Its nest was like a haystack in shape, about 3 ft. 6 in. high, made of half-decayed leaves and vegetable matter, over which the female is said to blow water to keep up the fermentation, which under the tropical sun causes the heat to hatch the eggs. Sixty eggs were taken from this nest; they appeared to me rather smaller than those I saw in Egypt, about 3½ in. long by 2½ in. in breadth, both ends the same size, and bluntly rounded. It is curious to think of a monster like this—ay, and sometimes twice his size—having once been contained in such a small piece of egg-shell.

"Hearing there was a travelling photographer in Mackay, I poured some corrosive sublimate down the throat and into the wounds of my 'defunct saurian,' as he was locally termed, and he kept perfectly sweet till the following day, when we produced an admirable likeness, which shows him exactly as he lay when

I first saw him. On dissection I found nothing in his stomach except eight or ten large stones the size of a flat—no food whatever; but I have found the shells of five river turtle inside one. There were only two sound teeth, the rest being lost, probably through age and the previous wounds. The points of the others were decayed off in the jaw bone, showing the young teeth, of which these animals are provided with sometimes four, one beneath the other, in one socket, each smaller than that above it; so that you see a tooth 3 in. long covering others down to as infantine tusk not ½ in.—a happy provision for old age, in a case where not even the most ruthless dentist would venture to measure for a false set.

"This species is the true crocodile, the indentations in the jaw to allow the teeth to pass being clearly shown. In the skull, also, the orifice for the nares has no division, two of the main distinctions between the crocodile and alligator. These brutes are found as far south as the Fitzroy and Burnett rivers, where some very large ones have been killed; and they abound in all the rivers from there northwards to the Gulf of Carpentaria. We find them a nuisance, as they prevent bathing, and are very destructive to dogs, who in this hot country will go into the water, where sooner or later they are sure to be taken. Though shy beasts when on land, they are bold enough in the water, and when hungry nothing will prevent them from coming at their prey. In swimming cattle across a river they have taken a calf, notwithstanding shouts and shots from the bank; and only a few weeks ago a neighbouring squatter, in fording the Pioneer on horseback, had his foot seized by one, and was only saved from a severe bite, or perhaps being dragged off his horse, by his stirrup iron getting jammed across the animal's jaws.

"However, they say of Britons, whenever they have a fine day they wish 'to go out and kill something'; so, as the ruthless race are increasing by degrees, the crocodiles are becoming 'beautifully bagged.' They are the only large game besides kangaroos we can try our skill on; and we have attacked them here at the fountain-head also, for this year two of their nests have been found and taken, with forty-five and forty-five eggs in them. The nests, which are generally built in the scrub near the water's edge, are mounds of small sticks, leaves, and vegetable matter, heaped up to a height of about 3 feet, frequently against and supported by the trunk of a tree—instantly doubtless pointing this out as morsure against floods. The eggs are laid without much order in this, rather above the centre, and well covered over with vegetable matter. The eggs are a perfect oval, the same size at both ends, and measure 3 inches by 2."

AUSTRALIAN VERSUS BUTCHERS' MEAT.

STRIKES are just now ubiquitous, and the fashion originally set by huge masses of men, and regarded very few years ago as a last and unprecedented resource, has now spread to all classes of society, and is made the foundation of numberless struggles between opposed interests. One form of the modern rage for "striking" is the resolution come to in some communities in various parts of the United Kingdom to offer a passive resistance to the enormous price of butchers' meat by the simple but sure process of abstaining from purchasing it, and we are given to understand that those who have arrived at this determination rely on the fact that they can procure fresh, palatable, and equally good meat at one third of the cost to which they have hitherto been subjected. That this is no exaggeration, but a plain statement of fact, may be gathered from the following:

"Australian meat is cooked, usually without bone, and sold at 6d. or 7d. per lb. I had heard serious reports of the proportions of our English joints contained in the bone, or going up the chimney in the process of cooking, so I had a trial made, with the following result: Leg of mutton, before roasting, 9 lb. 10 oz., after roasting, 6 lb. 12 oz. Weight of cooked meat, 4 lb. 13 oz., of bones, 1 lb. 15 oz., gravy, 10 oz. At this rate, if your housekeepers pay 9d. per lb. for their leg of mutton, they will find that the slice of cooked meat on their plate costs them about 19d. per lb., unless they make good use of the bones and small modicum of gravy. Such is the rate which we ought to compare with Australian meat at 6d. or 7d."

It is difficult to understand the apathy with which Australian meats have always been regarded in this country. We say "always" advisedly, for the increased demand which sprang up towards the end of last year was only noteworthy in consequence of the utter stagnation which it superseded. This willful neglect of wholesome, palatable fresh meat, offered at less than one-half the cost of that supplied by the butchers is the more surprising in the midst of constantly increasing complaints from all, especially from the poorer middle classes, of the greatly enhanced

cost of living, and of the difficulty of making both ends meet, a difficulty in which the chief ingredient is generally understood to be the butcher's bill. Yet nine-tenths of the struggling householders scorn the idea of combating and vanquishing the weekly nightmare of the butcher's bill by substituting cooked meat without bone, at 5d. or 6d. per lb., for raw meat with bone at 10d. to 1s. per lb.

The saving effected by buying cooked, boneless meat, with which there is no waste, instead of raw meat, which has a heavy proportion of bone, and with which there is a great deal of waste, must, it would be thought, be apparent to all. But even to those who have given so little consideration to the subject as not to have perceived this advantage, which probably amounts to a saving of about 6d. per lb. to the purchaser of canned meats, the striking difference between the two prime costs ought to carry conviction, and to induce at least a trial of fresh, wholesome, palatable meat, which will, in addition to supplying all nutritive requirements, effect a saving of many pounds sterling per annum. The principles of political economy enter so little into the education of the average British matron that we fear that she would not be moved to the trial of imported meat by the argument that its consumption on anything like a large scale must infallibly reduce the present ruinously high prices of butchers' meat which make it at present quite beyond the reach of millions, and which empty the hardly filled pockets of its poorer consumers into those of a class who thrive on the famine prices which have come to be submitted to with hardly a protest, because regarded as inevitable.

But we feel convinced that the fact that an immediate saving of something like two-thirds of the money expended with the butcher can be effected by the use of Australian meat merely requires to be properly made known to effect a complete revolution in the estimation in which fresh canned meats are now held by the public. To a great extent this can only be done by the retail traders who come into contact with the public, and who have constant opportunities of promoting the consumption of canned meats by the use of some such arguments as we have here set down. If the trade really desire to open up another lucrative branch of business, one, too, involving as little trouble or risk in buying as anything they now deal in, we advise them at once to make a leading article of Australian mutton, beef, and other meats. Too much faith should not be placed in particular brands. As a general rule all are good, and though of course occasional variations as to quality are found we believe that the different makes are equally liable to this contingency. It has been suggested that the scarcity of the smaller sized tins, and their additional cost, would make it well worth the while of enterprising grocers, especially those in the poorer neighbourhoods, to cut 6 lb. tins in half. This could easily be done by means of an ordinary opening knife, and would often secure the custom of that portion of the community which buys, in the most literal sense of the words, from hand to mouth.

It is reported at Woolwich that Brigadier-General Adye, C.B., Director-General of Artillery and Stores, will be selected for the task of examining the graves of the British soldiers in the Crimea.

FEMALE HOSPITAL DOCTORS.—The committee of the Midland Hospital for Women have elected Mrs. Louisa Atkins, who has recently taken the degree of M.D. at Zurich, after five years' study at the university, to be the resident medical officer and secretary. This is a fitting appointment; a woman on the staff is surely in place at a women's hospital.

THE presentation of the Freedom of the City to the Baroness Burdett Coutts took place on the 18th ult., and in the presence of the members of the Court of Common Council and a distinguished company the Town Clerk handed the baroness a handsomely designed gold casket, enclosing the thanks of the City Corporation for her ladyship's munificent gift of a market to the poor of the East-end.

TOPOGRAPHY IN FRANCE.—The constantly repeated assertions respecting the want of topographical knowledge in the French army have given rise to much attention being paid of late to the teaching of geography in the colleges and schools. A journalist, M. Waechter, has placed the subject before the public in the columns of the *Soir* in a striking form. "Topography," he says, "is a science of the highest utility; the study of it cannot be too much encouraged and disseminated;" and he introduces to his readers the name of M. Hennepin, who has commenced a course of topography intended especially for the teachers of common schools, and adds that such courses will be continued until all the primary schoolmasters are well grounded in the principles not only of using but of drawing maps and charts. M. Hennepin also proposes farther to deliver a course of three lectures in the common schools of each of the twenty arrondisse-

ments of Paris gratis. "These three lectures," he says, "will enable boys of ten years of age to understand a map, and to find their way about the environs of Paris as the Prussian Uhlans did, without making inquiries of any one." The idea is good and practical.

FIGHTING WITH FATE.

CHAPTER XI.

UPON the second morning after the arrival and installation of Miss Floyd at Floyd Manor, while Grimrod sat at his late breakfast in his own cottage, alone and grimly thoughtful, a visitor was ushered into his room and into his presence by the elderly housekeeper.

This visitor was Darrel Moor.

He had but just arrived from Lancashire, having quitted Bolton on the previous evening without again seeing his young bride or his valet Bing. He looked worn and almost haggard, and there was a desperate expression in his dark eyes and a sinister curl at his lips that declared to Grimrod that his mind was strung to some course at which his soul had vainly revolted.

The scheming manager smiled and arose, greeting his visitor with just a shade less of the deference and almost reverential respect he had been wont to accord to the supposed heir of Lord Waldemar. And, slight as was the change in him, Darrel Moor marked it with wrathful bitterness.

"This is an unexpected pleasure, Mr. Moor," said Grimrod, extending his hand. "I am glad to see you under my roof, sir. Have you been to the manor?"

"No, I have not," responded Darrel Moor, almost fiercely. "I left my luggage at the station, with orders to forward it on to the manor, and I set out to walk the distance, intending to call in upon you on my way."

"Then you have not been at breakfast? Permit me to order a cover for you."

Grimrod touched his bell, and ordered a plate for the guest.

While it was being laid Darrel Moor walked to the hearth and stood before it, his face towards the fire. He continued in no pleasant mood, and after a furtive glance at him and a furtive smile, Grimrod left him to himself.

The breakfast-room of Lord Waldemar's business manager, which was also his dining-room, evinced a love of luxury in its possessor not altogether in keeping with even his liberal means. The walls were covered with paper of a peculiar dark and dusky red tint strikingly illuminated with golden bees. An ornamental border of gold upon black velvet ran above the base board entirely around the room, and a similar band encircled the walls under the ornamental cornice at their top. The carpet was a dim and dark red fabric of great richness and value; the curtains were in keeping, and the furniture was of carved yellow oak. There were a few pictures, and a great ornamental sideboard, which was laden with silver and pieces of rare china.

The housekeeper withdrew, and Darrel Moor wheeled around, and his glance wandered about the room.

He was loth to speak of himself yet, and as he took the seat at the table which Grimrod pointed out to him he said:

"You've feathered your nest pretty handsomely, Grimrod. I've known more than one lord who would give his eyes for a home like this. I know my uncle gives you a liberal salary, and that you have money laid up in bank, but you live like a sort of nabob, with your private grounds, and so on. You have decidedly luxurious tastes."

"Yes," said Grimrod, quietly, as he poured out his guest's coffee, "I have luxurious tastes, Mr. Moor." "And I suppose you find perfect contentment here," said Moor, discontentedly. "You have reached what is to you the summit of human happiness."

"Almost," replied Grimrod, composedly. "Help yourself to the patty at your elbow, Mr. Moor. It is venison from my lord's own park. It's a fine thing, as you intimate, to be Lord Waldemar's business manager. I can imagine but one position I would prefer to it, and that is to be Lord Waldemar himself. To be Lord Waldemar, and owner of all the joint estates of Waldemar and Floyd would be worth years of life—would be worth all toil, and anxieties, all scheming, even all wickedness."

The manager spoke in a low voice, as if to himself.

He was for the moment actually forgetful of his visitor, but Darrel Moor received the words as addressed to himself, and his face flushed darkly, and he regarded the manager with sudden keenness.

"You are right," he said. "The barony of Waldemar and the estates attached thereto and those es-

tates which my uncle added to those of Waldemar, are worth all you say—all the toil, all the scheming, all the wickedness! A man would be an idiot to let an ordinary obstacle intervene between him and such a heritage. And yet—it was only yesterday, Grimrod—I looked upon myself as the future Baron Waldemar, and counted upon inheriting all the Waldemar grandeur."

He drew nearer to him with a sudden sweep of his hand a bottle of cognac brandy, and poured a portion of its contents into his coffee.

The Mephistophelean visage of the manager was as impassive and as sneering as usual as he kept his small eyes upon his guest.

"Did you get my private letter to you, Mr. Moor?" he asked, abruptly.

Darrel Moor drew out from his pocket the two letters he had received in the Bolton chapel, and flung them upon the table. They were crumpled, and Grimrod straightened them out, read them over, and arose and laid them on the fire, watching them burn to ashes. Then he returned to the table and to his duties as host.

"Who is this girl at the manor?" demanded Darrel Moor, after a pause. "Does she pretend to be the daughter of Wallace Floyd?"

"She has been proved to be the daughter of Wallace and Janet Floyd," answered the manager, coldly. "Lord Waldemar learned some weeks since of the fact that seventeen years ago a grand-daughter had been born to him in Austria, and he sent me to Austria to find the young lady. The task was difficult, of course, but I succeeded in tracing her out. I found her at Innsbruck, with a very intelligent woman—a lady by birth and education, a curate's daughter and a curate's widow, I believe—who had been obliged by poverty to take the position of child's nurse in Miss Floyd's infancy, and who had retained the child in her own care after the death of Wallace and Janet Floyd."

"Wallace and his wife are both dead then?"

"Yes. Mr. Wallace died in Austria, a little over two years after his marriage. His wife survived him some six months. The nurse, as I was saying, kept the child, knowing her to be an heiress. Mrs. Floyd was afraid of her father-in-law, as she had reason to be, and desired the nurse to keep the child until she should be grown up, unless the grandfather should apply for it. The nurse was poor, but soon after fell heir to some two hundred pounds a year from the estate of her brother. On this sum she retired with her charge to Innsbruck, and settled herself, and proceeded to educate Miss Floyd. This nurse is now at the manor as Miss Floyd's honoured companion."

"And there is no possible doubt that the girl is the daughter of my cousin and his wife?"

"Not the slightest shadow of doubt, sir. Lord Waldemar exacted the most irrefragable proofs, as was necessary where such vast interests are involved; but he was convinced, and he has openly acknowledged Miss Floyd as his grand-daughter and heiress, and the next to him in the Waldemar succession."

Darrel Moor winced.

"It all seems so improbable to me," he muttered. "I have often thought it possible that Janet Floyd might be living, but I have felt sure that Wallace was dead long since, and that he had died childless. The very fact that he had never written to me in behalf of the hour of his expulsion from Floyd Manor to beg me to intercede for him with his father was proof positive to me of his early death. The very fact that Janet Floyd never appealed to me in behalf of her children was proof positive to me that she had no children. It is odd, if they left a child—it is odd in any case—that they never wrote to me for aid during their residence abroad. They must have been very poor."

"They were actually destitute at times during the first year," said Grimrod, "and, as you say, it is singular neither wrote to you for help. I have always thought, begging your pardon, Mr. Moor, that there was some treachery at work at the time of Wallace Floyd's marriage. He was a gay, frank, impulsive young fellow, warm-hearted, honest, and unsuspecting, the very person to be duped by some designing villain. He actually adored his father, and, dearly as he loved Janet Arlyn, it was not like him to deliberately deceive and mock at his father even to marry her. When the truth of the story comes out, if it ever does, you'll find that Wallace Floyd was not deliberately disobedient and wilful, and that his estrangement from his father was a source of terrible grief to him."

The piercing glance of the manager was fixed upon the face of his guest without wavering, and with a power that made Moor actually flinch.

The visitor moved uneasily in his chair, and turned away his face.

"About Miss Floyd," he said, huskily, abruptly changing the subject. "I believe you said that she has been brought up as a lady."

"Yes, she is a refined, educated, and beautiful girl. She will be the rage in town. My lord will take her back to London with him. She is to be presented, I believe, by the Marchioness of Roxburghe, at an early drawing-room. My lord wrote to the marchioness, who is his relative, you remember, by last night's post. Miss Floyd's entrance into society under the auspices of the Most Honourable the Marchioness of Roxburghe will be a brilliant success."

"As she rises I go down," muttered Darrel Moor.

"Ah, if I had foreseen—"

"You would have made a grand match while you were able," finished Grimrod as his visitor hesitated.

"You would have done well, sir."

"The uncertainty that clouded my prospects of succession to the Waldemar title hindered me," said Moor, bitterly. "I am ambitious, and I resolved to wait until I became Lord Waldemar, when I might marry almost whom I pleased. But my status in society is altered by the advent of this young lady. I shall be only a commoner, although Floyd Manor will make me rich—"

"Mr. Moor," interposed the manager, impressively, "I cannot violate my lord's confidence, but I may say to you that you cannot count even upon the manor. Lord Waldemar has received scores of letters during the past five years concerning your habits and ways, and his heart is turned from you. He intends to make his grand-daughter his sole heiress, leaving you only a paltry two hundred a year."

Darrel Moor uttered a shout and leaped to his feet.

"Is this true?" he demanded, pale as death.

"It is true as fate. Your day is over, Mr. Moor. Some facts in your recent career have come to his lordship's knowledge, and he has resolved to cut you off, root and branch. He has sent for you now that he may offer you a choice between the various professions—"

"At any time of life? It is too late. I cannot—will not—work. It is a horrible, burning shame. Why didn't the girl die in her infancy? And, it was for this I schemed and toiled, that I perjured myself, that I—"

He paused and walked to the window, choking with rage.

The manager looked after him as a wily spider may look upon the fly entangled and struggling in his net.

"Why don't you marry, Mr. Moor?" he inquired, benevolently.

Darrel Moor did not answer.

"Pardon my boldness," continued the manager, "but are you engaged to any lady, or even in love, sir?"

Moor uttered a hoarse negative, to which an imprecation was attached.

"Don't despair, Mr. Moor," said Grimrod, also arising and placing his back to the fire. "If I might make bold to advise you, I should say, marry the heiress. Your interests come next after hers, you know, and you will then take your place in the Waldemar succession. The heiress is fresh from a secluded life on the Continent. I am free to say that if she see you before she is besieged by wealthier and nobler suitors, and if you lay siege to her with the flatteries you know so well how to apply to the fair sex, you can accompany her to town as her husband. The choice now seems to lie between marriage with Miss Floyd and a condition of genteel beggary."

"Yes, there is just where the choice does lie," muttered Darrel Moor between his teeth. "Let me think, Grimrod."

He remained motionless as a statue, looking out into the bleak garden. Grimrod continued to watch him as a spider watches an entrapped fly.

The soul of Darrel Moor was base to the core. He was capable of daring wickedness when his case and love of money were assailed.

He thought of Honor Gilt and his marriage with her on the previous day—the marriage that was only a marriage in name—and he cursed what he termed his mad infatuation of a moment, the beauty that had allured him to his ruin as he named it, the innocent, pure-souled, high-bred girl, who had yielded to his pleadings and changed her name for his at the altar; he cursed her with an awful hatred, and he cursed himself with no less bitterness.

The problem that was presented to him demanded immediate solution.

A fierce gleam came into his eyes and a cruel smile compressed his mouth as he turned around at last and faced his patient host, saying, in a firm voice:

"My mind's made up, Grimrod. I'll go in for the heiress."

Grimrod's face did not change.

One would not have guessed that this decision was what he most desired.

"When I become master of Waldemar I will re-

member you, old Grim," said Moor, with attempted lightness. "Is your clock right? It's almost ten. My luggage must have gone on to the manor, and I had better follow. I'll see you again, Grimrod, but now I am all impatience to see my uncle and his heiress. I'm off."

He gave the manager his hand and then withdrew into the hall.

Grimrod followed him and assisted him to put on his great-coat, and let him out of the house.

He then went into his office and watched Darrel Moor as he picked his way along the road toward the manor, and he muttered:

"My plans all prosper. I am to have my own way in everything."

Darrel Moor, unconscious of the eyes upon him, breasted the fierce March wind and hurried along the footpath close to the hedges bordering the roadside, and was soon beyond view of the watcher.

"The idea is a good one," he said to himself. "I will marry the heiress of the Waldemars. Honor will not dare cross my path. I will destroy all evidence of our marriage; the clergyman has already departed for Africa; the witnesses are only the half-blind and wholly deaf clerk who could not swear to my identity, the old pew-opener, whose evidence no jury would take, owing to her age and imbecility, and that girl, Honor's maid. I can do what I please with my man Bing. Carrington did not witness the marriage, or see the entry in the register. He was half-senile, and I can persuade him that he came in time to prevent the marriage. I can have trouble only with Honor and her maid, and I am able to deal with them," and he smiled darkly. "Both are young and inexperienced, and when they find they cannot prove the marriage I shall be able to scare them into silence. I hate now the girl I married as much as I loved her before. I experience an utter revulsion of feeling towards her. I look upon her as an obstacle that has nearly proved my ruin. Let her say what she will, I shall marry Miss Floyd!"

Thus resolving, he arrived in sight of the stately mansion of Floyd Manor. He quickened his steps and passed in at the small gate in the shadow of the lodge, and hurried on towards the house. He had often traversed those wide lawns and parks in the early summer without a thought of their beauty, feeling secure in the prospect of inheriting them with the broad farms attached; but on this March morning, when many of the trees were bare and leafless, and the sod was matted and brown, his heart thrilled with a strange, new realization of the wealth and beauty now lost to him.

The park was divided from the lawn by an invisible wire fence, and he could see the fallow deer among the tall, spreading pines and limes and acacias, and great old oaks; and he could see also, on the opposite side of the lawn, beyond other invisible wires, the herds of gentle thoroughbred cattle, that were the pride of all that portion of Yorkshire, and were celebrated throughout the kingdom.

"I will not lose all this," he said to himself, with a horrible oath. "I will possess it as my own if I give my soul for it."

He went on to the house and entered.

The hall porter was on duty, and Darrel Moor learned from him that his luggage had arrived, and had been taken up to the room he was accustomed to occupy at the manor. He learned also that Lord Waldemar had breakfasted in his own room alone as usual, and that he was now in the library.

He removed his outer wrappings, and went into the library with a faint preliminary knock upon the door.

Lord Waldemar was alone. He was standing at the door of his open safe, with three-time-worn yellow letters in his hands. One of them, the letter his son had written him from Brussels, and breathing fondest love and bitterest despair, was open. The hand that clutched it was trembling, and the stern and haughty mouth, half hidden by his frost-white moustache, was quivering strangely.

There was an unwonted flush upon his bronzed and warrior face—an unwonted gleam of remorse and tenderness in the black eyes set so deeply under his shaggy brows; but as the door opened the flush and the gleam alike disappeared, and he thrust the papers back into the secret drawer from which he had withdrawn them, and turned round, haughty and cold and self-possessed.

"Ah, it's you, Darrel!" he said, with a cynical smile, proceeding to lock the safe. "I expected you this morning. You have lost no time since receiving the letter Grimrod wrote you at my order."

Moor advanced, his haggard face reddening.

"Of course I hastened to you at once, uncle, on hearing the strange news contained in Grimrod's letter. I hasten to rejoice with you—"

"You look joyful!" sneered Lord Waldemar. "Come, come, Darrel, don't feign with me; I won't put you to so much trouble. I know you pretty well,

my dear nephew. You knew I was ill and lonely up here at the manor, but you never offered to come near me. You preferred to stay with some roystering friend in Lancashire; but the moment your own prospects are assailed steam can't bring you quickly enough."

"I imagined," said Moor, "that you might possibly have been imposed upon by some clever and designing people, and in justice to myself, as well as to your lordship, I have come in great haste to the manor. I suppose that the girl is undoubtedly your grand-daughter?"

"Undoubtedly my grand-daughter and heiress," responded Lord Waldemar, emphatically. "Your solicitude lest I should be 'imposed upon' is very gratifying to me, but I believe that I am still in the possession of all my faculties, and I defy any person living to impose upon me. I beg you to spare yourself any further anxiety on my account. As yet I am quite capable of taking care of myself, and I have not yet lost my power to read other people and their motives. Let me add, for your farther relief, that I have not accepted the claims of Hilda Floyd without full and ample investigation of them."

"I did not doubt that your lordship had been on your guard," apologized Moor, "but the price of the Barony of Waldemar is most tempting. A man might yield to such temptation, and play the impostor. But I beg your pardon, my lord," he added, hastily, rightly interpreting the expression of his lordship's darkening visage. "I have been led to think myself your heir for so long a time that it is hard to yield my place to another."

"I daresay," said the baron, dryly. "Darrel Moor, did my son ever write to you after that night, eighteen years ago, when I expelled him from my house?"

"Never, my lord. After that night I never saw Wallace or Janet Floyd, and never heard from either until Grimrod wrote me by your order."

"You were his friend, cousin, almost brother," said his lordship. "He used to look up to you as to an elder brother, although you were a year younger than he. He was ardent, impulsive, easily swayed. You were of a calmer temperament, and had an older head than he. Why did you not prevent that fatal marriage? Why did you not counsel him, or come to me with the story of his infatuation?"

"I told you as soon as I suspected it, uncle. I could not prevent the marriage, because I could not suppose he would really be guilty of such madness as to marry an Arlyn. I knew nothing of his plans."

The baron sighed. He had broken through the reserve of years in speaking of his son, and he had hoped to hear that Wallace Floyd had received some aid from Darrel Moor in the days of his bitterest poverty.

"I suppose you have come to stay for a week or so," said his lordship. "You can find your old room, Darrel. I have not seen Miss Floyd this morning. You will be good enough to take her through the house and tell her the old family legends. I will talk with you hereafter about your own prospects and future."

He dismissed Moor, who retired at once. He crossed the hall, intending to go up to his room, but through the open door of the morning parlour he caught a glimpse of a girlish figure standing at a window looking out upon the park. The figure was that of Miss Floyd. With a glance at his reflection in the mirror of the hall rack, Darrel Moor boldly entered the young lady's presence.

CHAPTER XII.

At about the same hour of the morning when Darrel Moor entered the gray old manor-house of the Floyds in Yorkshire, with the heart and the purpose of a scheming villain, his young bride was in her pretty wainscoted chamber in the Red House in distant Lancashire, making ready for her departure from the only home she had ever known.

Her maid Lucky was engaged in packing her trunks in her inner room. Honor had looked over her store of simple jewels, gifts from Captain Gilt or from school friends, and had wrapped them up carefully and stowed them away in their appropriate place in her dressing-bag. She was now looking over her store of money.

Her pocket-book was open on her lap, and its stock of bank-notes, gold and silver, was spread out before her.

Captain Gilt possessed all the lavish generosity traditionally attributed to sailors, and had bestowed upon Honor a larger personal income than his means perhaps warranted.

This at least was Mrs. Gilt's opinion.

He had delighted to foster delicate and dainty tastes in his adopted daughter, and had desired her to dress luxuriously, and to keep herself supplied with all the novelties in books and music. He had given her her half-yearly allowance before sailing upon

this last voyage to Alexandria, and as Honor had had a portion of her former allowance remaining this had not been touched.

She counted it over now carefully, and found herself the possessor of one hundred pounds, with a few additional shillings and pence.

"That will keep at bay the wolf of hunger a long, long time," thought the girl. "I can afford to keep Lucky with me, for a while at least, so I shall not feel utterly alone."

She gathered up her money into her pocket-book, and placed the latter in her bosom. She had put on an out-door costume of black silk, and looked in her pallor, and with the expression of utter desolation in her dusky eyes, as if she were in mourning.

A knock suddenly sounded upon her door.

Before she could arise or speak Mrs. Glint, in a faded and trailing blue dressing-gown, came into the room.

Honor courteously placed a chair for her, and she sank into it, looking around her critically.

"I hope you are not counting on my relenting, Honor," she exclaimed. "You are to leave this house to-morrow morning, you understand, if I have to put you out. I have come up to tell you that in consequence of your refusal to explain to me this mystery of yours and Mr. Moor's I cannot permit you again to see my innocent Claretta, and I think it advisable for you to leave the Red House to-day rather than wait for to-morrow. Where do you expect to go?"

"I don't know, madam."

"Why don't you try the eastern coast of England, or go up to London?" inquired Mrs. Glint. "I will give you a testimonial that will assist you to get a situation, or you may refer people to me. You had better go up to Southport, and see your old teachers. They may be able to procure you a situation as governess, possibly abroad. I want you to understand that, in leaving the Red House, you leave for ever the protection of Captain Glint. He is not your father, and it is time you realized the fact, and that you have no claim whatever upon him."

"I will leave the Red House this afternoon, madam," said Honor, her young voice trembling. "My maid is packing my clothes and books at this moment."

"You are not going to take your books and music? Claretta would have liked the music. But suit yourself. At what hour shall I have a cab for you?"

"Lucky will call one for me when I am ready."

"Of course you'll get rid of your maid immediately, Honor," said Mrs. Glint. "You will not be allowed to keep a maid when you are yourself a hired governess."

"I think it probable that Lucky and I will keep together for the present," said Honor, a calm sweetness in her face and voice. "You will excuse me from discussing with you my half-formed plans, since you have withdrawn from me so entirely your protection."

The angry reply that trembled upon Mrs. Glint's lips was checked by the appearance of the housemaid, who brought in a visitor's card upon a tray and presented it to Honor.

"Who is it?" demanded Mrs. Glint.

"Sir Hugh Tregaron, ma'am," replied the housemaid.

Mrs. Glint uttered a hasty exclamation, and departed to her own room to make some changes in her toilet, and to send a message to her daughter, who had not yet been visible that morning.

Honor descended to the cozy little drawing-room. As she entered it Sir Hugh Tregaron, who was standing, came forward to meet her.

The young Cornish baronet was a tall, distinguished-looking man, with a grandly noble face, dark gray eyes, and a brown complexion.

He was barely three-and-twenty years of age, and possessed a keen, strong, clear intellect, and was as brave as a lion and as tender and true of soul as a woman.

His face lighted up with a radiance like that of sunshine as he beheld Honor, and he held out his hand to her, taking her trembling hand in his strong, firm clasp.

Honor's face grew whiter, and her very heart grew faint within her.

"This is an unexpected pleasure, Sir Hugh," she said, bravely, forcing a smile upon her pale lips. "We thought you were in Cornwall."

"So I was yesterday morning," Miss Honor," said Sir Hugh, in a pleasant, low-toned voice whose every cadence thrilled her soul to its very centre. "But now-a-days you know it requires but a few hours to travel from one end of the kingdom to the other. You are not looking well. Have you been ill?"

Honor replied in the negative, and Sir Hugh led her to one of the recessed windows, which was surrounded on its inner side by a broad, cushioned divan.

They sat down here side by side. A certain embarrassment began to show itself in the young baronet's manner, and Honor, believing that she understood its cause, forced herself to say, with a desperate attempt at badinage:

"I feel quite hurt, Sir Hugh, that you should leave us to learn of your approaching happiness from strangers. We learned a day or two since quite by accident that you are expecting soon to be married. You must accept my best wishes for yourself and your bride, and papa's also."

"Captain Glint has sent me his best wishes for my happiness in a letter I received from him yesterday morning, which I have brought to show you," said the young Cornishman, gravely, yet with a sudden glow and sparkle in his eyes. "The gossips have misrepresented me, Miss Glint. I am not engaged to any lady."

Honor started, and flushed and paled alternately. Her forced gaiety had quite gone.

"Claretta heard so from a friend in Cornwall," she said, tremulously. "My congratulations are perhaps only premature."

"I hope so," answered Sir Hugh. "I wrote to Captain Glint at Marseilles. He found my letter there, and answered it immediately. As soon as I could, after receiving it, I started for Lancashire. Here is the captain's letter, Miss Glint," and he laid it before her. "I have awaited its arrival for days with the utmost impatience."

Honor attempted to glance at the letter, but it was all a blur before her eyes.

"I wrote to your father, Honor, telling him of my love for you," continued Sir Hugh, in a voice whose every word and tone was a caress, "and he has answered, giving me full permission to come to you myself. You must have seen that I love you, Honor. In those sunny days on the Mediterranean, in those moonlit nights on the grassy hill side, when the stars shone like glowing waxes above us, I learned to know you as you are, and to love you with all my heart and soul and strength. I feared to approach you too soon with my vows, but since our return to England I have thought of you by day and dreamed of you by night. I have ventured to hope that you would accept me. But my doubts are sometimes stronger than my hopes. Honor, I love you," and his passionate young voice leaped through all his restraint, and his passionate young eyes gazed her face. "You are my life. Come to me. Say that you love me."

He put out his arms to her, but she shrank back, her dusky eyes full of despair and anguish.

"No, no," she whispered. "Don't say that you love me, Sir Hugh."

"You are all that life holds of value to me, Honor Glint," he answered, his low voice trembling and thrilling. "You are my pearl of price, my own own lamb. Oh, Honor, have I deceived myself?" His face grew pale. "You do not love me then?"

The anguish in his tones called the girl's soul to her eyes. She had not known that she loved him until his wide, sad looks had struck the "electric spark" in her soul, but she knew now that she loved him, and she answered, in perfect truthfulness, forgetful of all else but the one fact:

"Yes, yes, Sir Hugh, I—I—"

Her tongue faltered, but her face confessed her love.

Again he held out his arms to her, and she swayed forward, and her head dropped almost to his breast, but in an instant she had drawn apart from him, avoiding his enraptured embrace, and cried out, piteously:

"Oh, Sir Hugh, spare me. I love you—I may own that just once—but I cannot marry you."

"But, Honor, your father approves our union. He has given me his blessing, and wishes me success in my efforts to win you, dear Honor."

"Did papa tell you anything about me?"

"Nothing, except that you were the truest, noblest, most-loving of daughters. He said that I could be married when he comes home."

Honor shook her head, trying in vain to be calm.

"You do not know it, Sir Hugh," she said, with a feverish haste, "but I am not Captain Glint's own daughter. I am a poor nobody, whom he picked up in the streets of Valetta, in the arms of an English woman, sixteen years ago. The woman was apparently my nurse. She was ill of fever, and was set ashore at Marseilles, and papa—Captain Glint—could not bear to abandon me, and he brought me on to England and adopted and educated me. I don't know who I am. The English nurse may have been my own mother. I am perhaps of low—possibly of ignoble—descent. I am no fit alliance for Sir Hugh Tregaron."

Sir Hugh's face beamed upon her in a love that was now all the stronger and more tender. He drew nearer to her and put his arm around her, despite her wild yet feeble struggle to fly from him.

"My poor darling!" he said, in a tone of yearning love and tenderness. "And this old story has tortured you like this? I have known it ever since we were on the Mediterranean together. Captain Glint told it me one night when we paced the deck—he and I. My noble, beautiful, high-souled Honor! It is you I love; your brave, earnest, loving nature, your honesty, trustfulness, and straightforwardness—the thousand charms of mind and soul and heart which I cannot analyze, but which I love and revere and worship. I do not care for your descent or connexions. It is you whom I love, you whom I would marry."

He drew her to him now and would have kissed her with the solemn and passionate kiss of betrothal, but Honor broke from him again and stood up before him, all her calm broken up, her hands twisting themselves together in a terrible despair, and a hopeless look in her dusky eyes.

"I—I cannot bear it," she murmured. "If I had known—it is too late, Sir Hugh—too late! I cannot be your wife. There is a barrier between us which cannot be surmounted."

Sir Hugh arose, and came nearer to her.

He saw that her great agitation had some terrible meaning. He would have taken her in his arms and soothed her as if she had been a little child, but she would not allow him to approach her.

He waited until she had forced upon herself a despairing calmness.

"Sir Hugh," she said, at last, her desolate young face fixed in the quietude of an utter despair, "I have told you truly: there is a barrier between us that nothing can surmount. You know that I appreciate your kindness to me. I dare not speak of love. I am far below you in worldly rank, and I trust that you will some day find some noble lady to bear your name whom you will love better than all others. Say no more to me—I cannot bear it."

"I will say only this, Honor," answered Sir Hugh Tregaron, his face glowing. "No fastidious ideas of a difference of kind shall separate you and me. I know that you love me. I love you with all my soul and I'll never give you up."

He uttered the resolution as if it were a vow.

"Think over what I have said, Honor," he added, "and meet me with a different face this evening. I will go now, since my presence agitates you so unusually, but I will come back after your dinner hour. You have no right to ruin both our lives through some ludicrous sense of honour, my own darling. You shall be mine. Heaven bless and keep you now and always," and the young baronet's tone quivered with the weight of tenderness. "I have agitated you sufficiently now, dear. Remember, you belong to me because you love me."

He caught her hand and raised it to his lips. Then he opened the door for her, and she fled up to her own room. He let himself out of the house and went to his hotel, sadly perplexed, yet hopeful and happy.

That afternoon, an hour or two before the time appointed for Sir Hugh Tregaron's second visit, Honor Glint and her maid departed in a cab from the Red House to seek their fortunes in the wide world.

(To be continued.)

VIENNA EXHIBITION.—The Sultan has, it is said, promised the Archduke Charles Louis of Austria to send a selection of the works of art and curiosities from the treasures of the imperial palaces for the coming Vienna Exhibition. The Sultan's collections are rich in art productions of the Middle Ages, and in MSS. Amongst the latter is a celebrated illuminated edition of Dante of the 14th century.

ARTILLERY MUSEUM, PARIS.—The Museum of Artillery is being moved from the old convent of the Dominicans, in the Place Saint Thomas d'Aquin, where it has been installed ever since 1795, to the Invalides, where it will occupy four large apartments, situate in the pavilion on the right hand when entering the quadrangle. The great number of pieces to be moved, and the large size and weight of some of them, render the operation one of considerable time and trouble, and it will not be completed till about the month of September.

BRIBING A JUDGE.—During the progress of business the other day at the Chelmsford Assizes a prisoner, who pleaded guilty to a charge of breaking into a church to steal, delivered to the judge (Baron Martin) a briefly written address, which commenced with this appeal:—"My lord, I have been over 13 weeks a prisoner waiting for trial. If it impresses your kind judgment in my favour I shall be ever thankful, and I will bring you as fine a bird for a present as ever was brought from India next voyage." The reading of this excited, of course, much merriment. It was evidently meant in all simplicity, and the judge laughed as heartily as any one. The learned judge sentenced him only to three months' imprisonment, observing, humorously, "But, mind, you must not bring me that bird."



[MRS. ALISON'S DEFIANCE.]

THE WILVERTONS' BALL.

MRS. ALISON sat in her low easy-chair and tapped her foot impatiently as she sewed. Mr. Alison walked the floor uneasily and frowned darkly. It was evident that there was a storm brewing in the domestic atmosphere. Indeed the first faint drops of the coming shower were already pattering down on the dainty dress Mrs. Alison was embroidering for her baby. "For pity's sake, Maud," broke forth her liege lord, "don't begin crying. Why can't you be sensible and look at the matter in a reasonable way? It ought not to be so hard for you to yield to my wishes when I have good reasons for asking you to do so."

"I don't know what you call 'good reasons,'" sobbed Maud Alison. "You don't know the least thing against the Wilvertons that you should wish me to refrain from attending their ball—such a magnificent affair as it's going to be, too."

"That is the chief of my reasons—because I don't know anything about the family—neither for nor against them. But the man's face is enough to condemn him. I wouldn't trust him an inch out of my sight."

"You're as unjust as can be," cried Mrs. Alison, indignantly, "to say such things about a stranger of whom you know nothing. I do believe you are jealous of him because he was so attentive to me at Mrs. Fitzgerald's party."

Mr. Alison whistled.

"Jealous! I should hope I wasn't quite so foolish. But I do think you are altogether too careless in taking up with people so rashly. You haven't known the family a month, yet Mrs. Wilverton is as much at home here as if the house belonged to her. I don't like it, and I expressly desire that you will see as little of either her or her husband as is possible until something more is known of both of them. Especially do I wish you to decline their invitation to this ball. I don't want my wife known as the chosen friend of a pair of adventurers."

Having delivered this decision, Mr. Alison walked out of the room.

Thereat his pretty wife was justly indignant as well as at what he had said. Anger had dried the tears upon her cheeks as she muttered:

"Adventurers indeed, as if that were possible. I am sure Mr. and Mrs. Wilverton are as elegant and refined as any people of our acquaintance, and everybody says the ball will be magnificent; and everybody is going too, and—and—so am I. I will not be deprived of every little pleasure I chance to care for because Fred chooses to dictate in that lordly manner. I shall go to that ball, in spite of him, so there!" And the little foot came down with emphasis upon the soft carpet beneath it.

Now please don't rush to conclusions in haste, and decide forthwith that Mr. and Mrs. Alison were a very disagreeable pair of people indeed, for I assure you they were nothing of the sort as a general rule. Please remember that the circumstances under which I have introduced them to your notice were extremely unfavourable to that display of angelic submission to each other's wishes which married people are supposed always to be capable of, no matter what the provocation to a contrary state of affairs may be.

It was strange that Mrs. Alison should have taken so strong a fancy to the Wilvertons—a family who had come to Bassett quite unheralded and of whom no one knew anything.

They had taken an elegantly furnished house on lease, engaged seats in the most fashionable church, and altogether had made a lavish display of wealth and importance—too lavish to be altogether in good taste.

When Mrs. Alison had met them first she had had her foolish little head quite turned by the gushing intimacy proffered by the woman and the flattering attentions of the man.

They were a handsome couple, it could not be

denied. She was stately, tall, and stylish, was beautiful and debonair. Still she had a dashing way that was hardly refused, and he was almost coarse sometimes. But their apparent wealth might cover more heinous sins than these, and the society of Bassett had, almost universally, taken them up and fraternized with them directly. Some few prudent souls, like Mr. Alison, were disposed to stand aside, however, and wait for time to test the real value of these newcomers; but these were voted old-fogyish and their opinions utterly flouted.

Thus it was that Mr. and Mrs. Alison so nearly quarrelled this bright morning in early December. The Wilvertons had issued cards for a grand reception and ball, to which nearly all the *élite* of the town had responded favourably. Could Mrs. Alison decline? She did not intend to at all events.

Yet it was with rather a falling heart that she penned her acceptance of the invitation and commenced her preparations for the great event.

She had never before in their pleasant married life acted so wilfully in opposition to her husband's wishes. But this time she felt herself in part excusable.

"If he had asked me not to go," she said, half-penitently, "I might have thought better of it; but I won't be commanded. I didn't marry to become my husband's slave, and I'll go to this ball if only to show him that I can think for myself and shall act as I choose, whether he objects or not."

You see the little lady was fast working herself up to a very high pitch of virtuous indignation, and she was scarcely disposed to pay any attention to the faint monitions of conscience, especially when it dared to whisper that she might be wrong.

The night of the ball came round at last, as all things do when patiently waited for. At breakfast that day Mrs. Alison had announced to her husband her intention of attending the ball.

"You are not in earnest?" he said,

"Indeed I am," was the defiant reply. "My preparations are all completed, and Mrs. Leighton has offered me a seat in her carriage, in case you persist in not escorting me yourself."

"I certainly shall not go," her husband answered, firmly. "I cannot believe my little wife will go without me," he added, pleasantly. "Give me a kiss, puss, and when I come home to-night I trust you will have put all this nonsense out of your head. By, by."

But his wife would not look at him when he kissed her, and she stamped her foot angrily as the door closed behind him and she heard his careless whistle as he ran down the steps.

"I'm not a baby," she said to herself, "and I won't be treated like one. He shall find out that I can go without him."

He did arrive at a realizing sense of the fact when he came home to tea that night.

Running lightly upstairs, the first sight that met his amazed eyes was his pretty wife in full festive robes. She turned from the mirror as he came in and he stared carelessly against the toilet table.

"Well, dear," she said, with a light affectation of unconsciousness that she was vexing him in the least. "You see I have decided to go, after all. How do you like my dress? I dressed early on purpose for you to see it."

Mr. Alison had stopped short as she spoke with hand uplifted.

"Maud," he said, in a vexed way, "What does this mean?"

"Have you forgotten so soon?" she answered, lightly. "It is the Wilvertons' ball, you know. I told you this morning that Mrs. Leighton had offered to call for me and bring me home again. Don't you remember?"

"I remember something you seem to have forgotten," was the cold reply; "that is, that I did not and do not wish you to go to this ball. Those Wilvertons are not fit people for you to associate with; of that I am certain. The air is full of rumours against them, and I predict that you will find but very few decent people there to-night."

"What nonsense you are talking," she said, genuinely surprised now. "Why, I know there are plenty of the best people going; I have scarcely met one who has declined the invitation."

"That may be," was the quiet reply, "but many men who have heard as much and more than I have will change their minds to-night and keep themselves and their families away. Those who do go will be very sorry for it I am quite sure."

"What terrible things have you heard, I should like to know?" she asked, half-convicted.

"Only rumours I own," he answered "but they are bad enough. There was never so much smoke without a little fire, I—"

Mrs. Alison interrupted him with blazing eyes.

"Rumours indeed! You need say no more. I do not believe one word of it all; and I shall go. That is decided."

"But, Maud—"

"I don't wish to hear any more. I am going."

She went—went with Mrs. Leighton when she called for her—went with a smiling face and an angry, rebellious heart.

The Wilvertons greeted her with effusion. But there were very few of her friends present, and somehow the atmosphere seemed a different one from what she had been accustomed to. There were a number of strangers present—ladies and gentlemen. The former did not impress her favourably, and the latter seemed rather demonstrative in their devotions to the fairer sex.

Mr. Wilverton made her uncomfortable moreover with his persistent attentions, and altogether she was not sorry when Mrs. Leighton proposed returning home. They went early, and most of their particular friends followed in their wake—those at least who had not gone before.

Very little conversation passed between Mr. and Mrs. Alison that night—very little for some days thereafter.

He considered himself justly aggrieved and was indignant accordingly. She felt herself in the wrong, was too proud to own it, and was miserable in consequence.

Meanwhile the whispers against the Wilvertons increased in number and importance. It began to be generally conceded that there was something wrong about them, and people who had taken them up on trust were gradually dropping their acquaintance.

Mrs. Alison, however, prided herself upon being no summer friend, and her intimacy with the Wilvertons seemed in no wise diminished.

Seemed, I say, for she was growing to dislike them both as she saw more and more of them. Mrs. Wilverton's dashing ways seemed coarse now, and no words could tell how she was growing to loathe the man who grew bolder and more outspoken in his admiration of her each day.

But the end was very near.

Mr. Alison came home to dinner one night in a half-subdued tremor of excitement. If there was a little thrill of triumph mixed with it who can blame him? Human nature is weak, and the best of us are very apt to exult in the downfall of our enemies, just at first before the Christian spirit has time to check the feeling.

"Maud, dear, I have news for you," he said, striving to speak calmly, but failing signally in the attempt.

Mrs. Alison looked up, a little surprised at the "dear," which had fallen from his lips but rarely since that unfortunate ball, but, truth to tell, she was rather glad to hear it again.

"What is it?"

"It's about the Wilvertons. You see," he went on, hurriedly, "there's been, as you know, a great deal of talk about them lately—more perhaps than you are aware of—and people haven't scrupled to call them adventurers, if not swindlers. It seems they are even worse than that—"

"What?" cried Mrs. Alison, sharply.

"Criminals! At least the man is. He was arrested this morning by a detective from London who has been on his track for some time. His very boldness in coming here and launching out in the style he has, under an assumed name and with all the appearance of great wealth, had thrown the police off the scent for a little while. But they've got him now, and he's safe for a twenty years' term at least."

"What has he done?" asked Mrs. Alison, faintly, after a long pause.

"Perhaps you will recognize his real name—it is Willis—"

"The notorious bank robber?"

"The same."

Mrs. Alison did not speak for many minutes. Then she remembered that she had been—or had tried to be—a friend to Mrs. Wilverton. She could not desert her now that so terrible a sorrow had fallen upon her.

"Will you ring the bell for Lucy?" she said to her husband, very quietly. "I want my bonnet and shawl. I am going to see Mrs. Wilverton. She ought not to be left to bear this trouble alone—and I know of no one who will go to her now."

Mr. Alison stared amazed. Even he had never realized the real nobility that, despite her faults, was inherent in his wife's nature.

She had risen now and was standing, very pale and still, by the table. He went to her and put his arms around her and drew her head down to his breast.

"My noble Maud," was all he said.

She clung to him, sobbing.

"Oh, Fred—you do forgive me for treating you so badly all these days?" she pleaded. "I am so sorry now."

"I need forgiveness too, darling," he answered, earnestly, "and we will both forget and forgive. Shall it not be so?"

She lifted her face and kissed him softly.

"Poor Mrs. Wilverton, Fred. Will you not go with me to see her? I do not like her really, though I have tried to, but I cannot leave her to bear this alone."

Mr. Alison held his wife in a close clasp.

"I have not told you all, dear," he said. "There is no Mrs. Wilverton—or Willis, as her name would be if she had any right to bear the name of the man who, if report says true, ruined himself and committed the robbery to gratify her extravagant demands."

"Fred!" Mrs. Alison's face grew very pale, "you don't mean that she—"

"Was not only not his wife but a thoroughly bad woman to boot," he answered, sternly.

It was a severe lesson, and it is safe to say a thoroughly effectual one, not only to Mrs. Alison but to the people of Bassett, who had admitted these people into their society without question simply because of the lavish display of wealth they made.

Moreover, there are a very few differences of opinion between Mr. and Mrs. Alison now-a-days. She is more willing to take his opinion of people as a correct one, and he has learned his wife's heart too well not to trust her motives always if he sometimes doubts her judgment.

J. A. B.

SNAKE-CHARMING IN LONDON.

SNAKES are regarded with horror and repugnance by the generality of man and woman kind, and for this reason their habits and instincts have not been sufficiently studied. Snakes may be broadly divided into poisonous and not poisonous. As a rule poisonous snakes will get out of a man's way if not attacked or insulted. I do not recommend people trying to tame poisonous snakes, nor do I advise them to charm them after the fashion of the Indian jugglers, though, as has been often shown, these poisonous snakes are generally "doctored" as regards their fangs before the exhibition takes place.

There is now in London a gentleman who has a charming family of pet snakes—harmless, of course. This gentleman's name is Mann. He is a professor of music, and lives in Cheyne Walk, Chelsea. Mr. Mann called on me a day or two ago at my office, and requested me to give him assistance, as he has got into a bother with his neighbours about keeping his snakes.

Anxious to be of service to this gentleman, I called at his house in order to examine his snakery. He placed in the middle of the room a large box, which was carefully locked. He told me the box was always locked, unless he or his wife took out the snakes to feed or examine them. The first he produced from the box was a very fine common British snake (*Coluber natrix*). His snakes have all got names, and this one's name was Julia. Julia not long ago laid thirty-six eggs, which were hatched out successfully.

The next was also a common British snake. The ring round the neck was very bright in this snake. She rejoices in the name of Sylvia. Sylvia is very good at frogs; lately she ate nine frogs, seven large frogs and two small, at one meal, one after the other. Mr. Mann has also two other common snakes, whose names are Proteus and Beatrice, or her of the golden hair. This modern snake-charmer then dived his hand into the box, and brought out an exceedingly lively brown-coloured snake. The head is remarkably pretty and lizard-like, and it has the power of moving the head very quickly from side to side; the eye is also remarkably brilliant. This snake was bought from Jamrach; it is called a Lacertine, and comes from the coast of Mogador, Northern Africa; it is perfectly harmless. Mr. Mann has had the lacertine about twenty months. It is a pretty, elegant creature. It feeds on white mice.

Mr. Mann then showed me the gem of his collection. It is a remarkably handsome Brazilian boa, measuring between five and six feet long, and weighing from twelve to fourteen pounds. The name of this snake is "Cleo," short for Cleopatra. Continual handling and petting have caused this snake to become most remarkably tame, and I think there can be no doubt that she knows individuals. When placed on the table "Cleo" would not come to me at all, but glided away to her master, who was sitting at the opposite side of the table, and, stretching her length from the table to the chair, gradually pulled her long length on to him. She then glided up his right side, and, folding her coils round his neck, placed her head close to her master's face, and there she lay for some minutes quivering her black forked tongue with evident pleasure.

Mr. Mann's two little children, aged five and six respectively, then came into the room. They immediately ran to the snake and began playing with it, kissing it, and pulling it, calling it "Cleo; dear Cleo." "Cleo" was then made to glide on the floor; the children then ran after her and picked her

up, and the little girl who picked her up put her round her neck like a boa. (I wonder if this was the origin of the word boa.) "Cleo" evidently enjoyed the fun as much as the children. It was very curious to see these two little children encircled in "Cleo's" ponderous folds, reminding me much of the celebrated statue of the Laocoon, and, if I recollect rightly, the marble children in the statue are represented as about the same age and size as Mr. Mann's two children. "Cleo" is a particular favourite of Mrs. Mann's, and I saw a very nice photograph of her with "Cleo" coiled round her neck. I subsequently saw Mrs. Mann in this attitude with her pet snake. "Cleo" had shed her skin several times, and it is curious to remark that she has shed her skin ten times in two years. Mr. Mann has the last skin shed. It is quite perfect, and as thin as tissue paper, and I should think would make a good pattern for fancy lace work.

"Cleo" feeds principally on pigeons. If a pigeon is put into her cage, and she is not hungry, she seems to make friends with the pigeon, and will never attempt to eat it. Should, however, a fresh pigeon be put into her cage she will devour it instantly. She feeds once a fortnight, and two pigeons will about last her for this time. Mr. Mann has observed that when let loose "Cleo" always tries to climb upwards, whereas the lacertine always seeks the ground. "Cleo" most certainly knows her master and mistress. Once when they went out of town "Cleo" was sent away. She pined, and would not feed during their absence. When Mr. and Mrs. Mann returned, after six weeks' absence, "Cleo," on hearing her mistress's voice, instantly rushed out of her box, curled herself round her, and kissed her face. She evidently recognized her kind friends and protectors.

Mr. Mann has also another large Indian python, but this snake is not very well, and has private apartments to itself in a leather carpet-bag. The snakes will feed out of Mr. Mann's hand. The common snakes eat frogs, and frogs only; the lacertine eats white mice; the python delights in guinea-pigs. Altogether I was exceedingly pleased with Mr. Mann's collection of snakes. By his very successful snake-taming he has opened up quite a new chapter in natural history, and has shown what persevering kindness will do in taming snakes, poor creatures which have hitherto been thought to have little or no intelligence.

F. B.

THE SILKWORM.

ENTOMOLOGISTS have named the silkworm *Phaenobombyx Mori*. It is a native of China, and is known from an early period to have also existed in Persia. When exposed to a genial temperature of above 55 deg. Fahr., but not beyond 85 deg., a minute dark-coloured worm issues from the egg, which latter is not larger than a small pin's head. This grub is peculiarly sensitive to cold and noise—so much so indeed that a sudden fall in the temperature, the near barking of a dog, or even a hearty and prolonged burst of laughter, has been known to injure the young worms, and immense numbers are said to perish during thunderstorms. It is absolutely necessary, therefore, that the nurseries should be isolated and guarded as much as possible from noisy intrusion. Viewed in this aspect it is not unlikely that the deeply rooted objection entertained by the mandarins to the introduction of railways may have arisen from not unreasonable fears that the noise of passing trains and the shrill claxon of the locomotives might kill all the silkworms in any district passed through.

So long as the temperature of the air to which the eggs may happen to be exposed is below 55 deg. they do not hatch, and may be transported from place to place, or from China to Europe or America, with impunity; but when this limit of heat is exceeded the eggs vivify, and may excite anxiety lest the process of incubation should precede the arrival of the mulberry at its edible age. On this interesting point Bishop Hall says:—"In the very silkworm I have observed that the small and scarce sensible seed, which it casts, comes not to life and disclosure until the mulberry, which is the slowest of all trees, yields her leaf for its necessary preservation."

During its development into the caterpillar form the silkworm casts its skin several times, when it acquires a faint greenish colour, speckled with blue or yellow, and sometimes with black spots, especially about the head; it then ceases to feed and commences to spin. Up to this point the grub has been devouring food at a rate far surpassing that of any other known living organism, as much as ten times its weight of leaves per day being debited to its voracious appetite by some native authorities. But this is probably an exaggeration, as the worm only eats the softest and best portions of each leaf it attacks.

An ancient Chinese writer, after describing the management of the worms for an annual crop of silk, states: "The reason why the farmers take so much

pains to make these little insects eat so much and so often is to forward their growth and make them spin the sooner; the great profit which they expect from these creatures depends upon this care. If they come to their full growth in twenty-three or twenty-five days a bundle covered with worms, whose weight at first was a mass (that is, little more than a drachm) will produce 25 ounces of silk; whereas if, for want of proper care and nourishment, they do not come to perfection in less than twenty-eight days they will yield but 20 ounces; and if they are a month or forty days in growing they will produce only about 10 ounces." This is most interesting testimony, evincing the financial wisdom of abundantly nourishing young stock of any species, and probably in no other instance in nature could such an experiment have been so accurately tried and the result registered with such exactness and precision.

About the thirtieth day from incubation, and first of its caterpillar life, the silkworm expels a viscid secretion through apertures in its nose, which glues it to the leaf or to whatever it may happen to rest on at the moment. Next day it spins a tracery of thread around its body as a protection against enemies and cold; and two days afterwards the cocoon hides the industrious little spinner from view. Ten days more having passed, and its willow plump body somewhat withered with fasting and hard work, the caterpillar changes into a chrysalis, in which ephemeral state it remains a few days longer, pending the last and most extraordinary transformation of all.

In a condition of nature the pupa, being now completely metamorphosed and independent of protection, proceeds to cut its way through the cocoon; escaping from which, it soars into the air, a happy, glittering insect. But as this method of obtaining its freedom involves the destruction of the cocoon by rupturing in many places the continuity of the thread, and thus rendering the silk of inferior value, on a silk farm, except in the case of moths preserved for the continuation of their species, all the others are killed by plunging the cocoons into boiling water; are they have begun to perforate their prisons. The released moths deposit their eggs on sheets of soft prepared paper, very soon after they have obtained their liberty, to which the eggs adhere by the aid of a transparent gum with which they are naturally surrounded.

A GREENLAND GLACIER.

We watch the ice-stream until the front of it has reached the fiord. But here it does not stop. The bed of the sea is but a continuation of the same inclined plane as the bed of the valley, and its onward course is continued. It pushes back the water; it makes a coast-line of ice where there had been a beach; and a white wall now stretches from one side of the fiord to the other. As it flows onward it gets into deeper and deeper water, its foot still resting on the bottom of the sea. Thus the ice wall sinks gradually down as it moves along, and, in course of time, it has almost gone out of sight. Then it gets beyond its depth.

When fresh ice floats freely in sea-water there is one-eighth of it above the surface to seven-eighths below. If the glacier should project far enough out into the sea to present more than this proportion then the buoyancy of the water will lift the end of the ice-stream until it attains its natural equilibrium. To do this, of course, a break must occur, as the ice will not bend. But, for a long time, the continuity of the ice is not interrupted—so great are its depth and width. But finally it is compelled to give-way; the force applied becomes too great for its powers of resistance. A crack, beginning at the bottom, is opened with a fearful crash. The crack widens, and when it is completed to the top a fragment is detached. The fragment is buoyed up to its proper level, and while the loud noise of the disruption is echoing among the hills, and the great waves of its cresting are rolling away, the monstrous mass is coming slowly to rest, ready to float off with the current to the ocean. This fragment, as we have already seen, is the iceberg. Its birth is attended with the most violent disturbance of the sea and air, and presents a magnificent spectacle. The Greenlanders say, when the awful sound apprizes them of the breaking off of a fragment, that the glacier is going to "calve."

Dr. Evans was a spectator once of such an event, in a fiord far north of Sermitliak, in company with a man named Philip, a dweller in the most northern inhabited spot on the earth's surface, Upernivik; and he describes the wild, ungainly gambols of the new-born child of the Arctic forests, when tossed like a toy into the sea among its rocking and tumbling brethren, the tremendous commotion of the waters, and the awful concert of thundering sound, as overwhelmingly grand. This is one of the most sublime exhibitions of the great forces of nature; and the contrast of the restlessness and turmoil with the total absence of animal and human life must be deeply impressive.

The voyagers of the "Panther" were destined to behold a spectacle as wonderful, perhaps, and fraught with appalling danger to themselves. This was the disintegration of a huge mass of the great glacier of the fiord of Sermitliak, one splendid spire of ice four hundred feet high, which stood out—detached from the multitude of spires and arches of such exquisite and symmetrical form as no one can conceive who has not seen them—almost from the sea-line to its summit. In the grass-green water this marvellous crystal shaft could be traced a long way into the sea.

The marvel was preceded by a loud, terrible noise, which turned every eye upon the great spire in advance of the glacier. "The sound," says our author, "was as though the foundations of the earth had given way, and the spire seemed to be descending into the yawning depths below. It did not topple over and fall headlong, but went down bodily, and in doing so crumbled into numberless pieces. The process was not instantaneous; the spire broke up as if it were composed of scales, the fastening of which had given way, layer after layer, until the very core was reached and there was nothing left of it. In a few moments the whole glacier became enveloped in spray, a semi-transparent cloud, through which the crumbling of ice could be faintly seen. Then the summit of the spire sank away amid the great white mass of foam and mist. Other spires, less perfect in their form, disappeared in the like manner, and great sculps peeling from the glacier in various places fell into the sea with a prolonged crash, followed by a loud hissing and crackling sound. Then in the general confusion all particular reports were swallowed up in a peal compared with which the loudest thunder of the heavens would be but a feeble sound. The whole glacier was enveloped in a cloud, through which, while the fearful sound was pealing forth, I saw a blue mass rising, at first slowly, and then with a bound, and now, from out the foam and mist, a wave of vast proportions rolled away in a widening semicircle. The wave came down upon us with the speed of the wind. The swell occasioned by an earthquake can alone compare with it in magnitude. It rolled beneath the "Panther," lifted her upon its crest, and swept her towards the rocks. An instant more, and I was flat upon the deck, borne down by the stroke of falling water. Another and another came in quick succession, but each was smaller than the one preceding it. The "Panther" was driven within two fathoms of the shore, but she did not strike. Our anchor held, or our ship would have been knocked to pieces, or landed high and dry with the first great wave that rolled over us."

FACTIE.

AMUSING NOTICE.

At a negro ball, instead of "Not transferable" on the tickets, notice was posted over the door: "No gentleman admitted unless he comes himself."

THE ACME OF MEANNESS.—There is a wholesale grocer who is said to be so mean that he was seen to catch a fly, hold him up by the hind legs, and look in the cracks of his feet to see if he hadn't been stealing some of his best sugar.

"IT'S A WISE CHILD," ETC.
Papa: "I'm sorry to hear though, my dear boy, you have failed again in obtaining a prize this quarter. You must be very wooden-headed."
Dear Boy: "Yes, pa, I'm afraid I'm a chip of the old block."

IN THE MINING DISTRICTS.

Sandy: "I say, Jock, mon, did ye ever get hair broached by machinery?"

Jock: "Naw! What loike is it?"

Sandy: "Eh, mon, it's awfu' nice. It's near as good as scratchin' yer head!"

AN EYE TO BUSINESS.

Uncle Levi: "Now, Sammy, tell me, have you read the beautiful story of Joseph?"

Sam: "Oh, yes, uncle!"

Uncle: "Well, then, what wrong did they do when they sold their brother?"

Sam: "They sold him too cheap, uncle, I think!"

ONE OF ANCIENT SORT.—A Scotch minister told his neighbour that he preached three hours and a half the Sunday previous. "Why, minister, were you not tired to death?" asked the neighbour. "Aw, nae," said he, "I was as fresh as a rose, but it would have done your heart good to see how tired the congregation was."

COURTSHIP BY ELECTRICITY.—"It is a fact," says Mr. Scudamore, "that a telegraph clerk in London who was engaged on a wire to Berlin formed an acquaintance with and an attachment for a female clerk who worked on the same wire in Berlin, that he made a proposal to her, and that she accepted him without having seen him. They were married, and the marriage resulting from their electric affinities is supposed to have turned out as well as those

in which the senses are more apparently concerned." This is a hint which we hope will not be lost on the telegraph young ladies and gentlemen. Courtship by electricity must be a thrill of joy, except one end turns on the electricity too strong.

A SOURCE OF GRIEF.

"Now what's the matter?"
"Oh, very annoying—mistle died and left me half a million."

"Well, that's the most novel subject for grief I ever heard."

"Nonsense. Don't you see I must pay my debts now? That's what troubles me."

IRISH EVIDENCE.

"Pray, my good man," said a judge to an Irishman, who was witness on a trial, "what did pass between you and the prisoner?"

"Och, thin, plase yer lordship," said Pat, "sure I sees Phelim atop of the wall." "Paddy," says he, "What?" says I. "Here," says he, "Where?" says I. "Whisht!" says he. "Hush," says I, and that's all, plase yer worship."

KNOWING HOW.—Some soldiers were digging a well. When they came to the water the commanding officer went to inspect progress. "Well, Kelly," said he to the Irishman at the bottom of the well, "you have found the water at last." "Ah! kumma," replied the other, "it all depends upon knowing how the thing ought to be done. Any other man but myself would have gone forty feet deeper without coming to it."

MAIN STRENGTH.

Ole Bull was once seeing the sights at Doneybrook Fair when he was attracted by the sound of a very loud violin in a tent. He entered, and said to the player:

"My good friend, do you play by note?"

"Niver a note, sir."

"Do you play by ear, then?"

"Niver an ear, your honour."

"How do you play then?"

"By main strength, be jabbers."

L'EMBARRAS DES RICHESSES.

Vivacious Guest (limited income): "Don't keep a brougham?"

Languid Host (thousands a year): "Agh! What's the use? Lots of hansom cabs by 't you want to go anywhere."

Vivacious Guest: "But a saddle-horse or two, surely?"

Languid Host (with a shudder): "Agh! then you, no, my dyar fella! Why, I should have to wide in the park!"—Punch.

WANTED A FURLOUGH.

A full-fledged Militian in the trenches before Yorktown was seen to hold his hand before the earth-work, and his captain asked:

"Pat, you minny, why are you doing that?"

"I am feelin' for a furlough sure!"

Just then a minie-ball struck his arm just below the wrist. Slowly drawing it down and grasping it with the other hand to restrain the blood, a queer expression of pain and humour passed over his face as he exclaimed:

"An' faith, it's a discharge!"

A HUNGRY NATION.—An American gentleman was writing his name in the book of a Paris hotel while the waiter was looking over his shoulder to see if he did it correctly, when a flea jumped on to the paper just at the side of the number of his room. At this the American quickly added the following words, to the amusement of the waiter, who saw the transaction between the gentleman and the flea:

"What a great and what a hungry nation! Even the flea jumps on the paper to see the number of the room for which I am registered, in order that he may not miss the opportunity and be in readiness for me."

LAMBS.—A certain presiding elder, who was noted for being seldom up to time, seldom very animated, and seldom very brief, once kept a congregation waiting a long time for his appearance, and when at last he did come he preached them a very prosy sermon of unusual length on the text "Feed my lambs." He had not yet finished when the old minister rose from a seat in the congregation and said: "Brother, I have had some experience in raising lambs myself, and I have found that the following rules are absolutely essential to successful lamb-raising: First, give them their food in season; second, give them a little at a time; and, third, give it to them warm."

A GOOD GIVE.

When James T. Brady, the celebrated lawyer of New York, first opened a lawyer's office he took a basement room which had been previously occupied by a cobbler. He was somewhat annoyed by the previous occupant's cobbles, and irritated by the fact that he had few of his own. One day an Irishman entered. "The cobbler's gone, I see," he said.

"I should think he had," tartly responded Brady.

"And what do you sell?" he inquired, looking at the solitary table and a few law books.

"Blockheads!" was the response. "Begorra," said the Irishman, "we must be doing a mighty fine business; you hain't but one left."

DAT'S DE WAY DE WHITE FOLKS DOES.—Sam Johnson, of New Orleans, was a great authority among his fellows, and one day he called his satellites together and addressed them on the importance of adopting a fiscal policy more nearly resembling that which had raised to opulence their Caucasian neighbours. "Niggers," said he, "if yer want to get rich yer must sbe yer money. Yer must hab a bank. Dat's de way de white folks does it." These words fell on a propitious soil. The project was swiftly put into execution, and the earnings of the week were promptly forthcoming. "Niggers," says Sam, "I will be de cashier; yer must 'post de money wid me, and when yer want any yer must draw on it. Dat's de way de white folks does." All went merrily for a while, and the depositors were highly elated about "de bank." But by-and-by there began to be trouble—pot with the depositors, but the drafts. It was found easier to get funds into this model institution than to get them out again, and Sam was compelled to face the angry customers and explain. "It's all right," says he, "de bank's only suspended, and in a few days she will 'gain resume. Dat's de way de white folks does." This expedient lasted but a little while, however; suspicion of foul play day by day increased, and the storm was about to burst on the head of the great operator, when he found it expedient to gather once more his infuriated depositors and face the matter frankly. "Niggers," said he, "dar ain't no use a mournin' about it. De money's spent and de bank's broke, and dat's de way de white folks does."

LEAP-YEAR FETTERINGS.

Eli Perkins has undergone matrimonial proposals at the hands of one of his lady friends, and he has this to say about it:

First, I called on my liquid-eyed brunette friend, Miss Sallie Morris. Now, I've spent a good deal of money on Miss Sallie for operas, bouquets, lunches, etc. I've been trying for two years to win her affections.

Last night, full of love and hope, I rang old Morris's door-bell. In a moment Miss Sallie came by myself on a retired sofa. After speaking of the coming opera I felt her velvety hands touch mine.

"Do you know, Mr. Perkins," she said, looking me straight in the face, "that to-day is our proposing day."

"Well, I suppose so," I remarked, looking modestly down at her mosaic bracelet.

"Well, you know, Eli, my dear Eli, that I have been out with you a good deal."

"Yes," I replied, beginning to feel embarrassed. "You know, my dear," she said, taking both of my hands, "that it is costing me a good deal for dresses and gloves and—"

"And costing me a good deal for carriages, bouquets, and lunches," I interrupted, with increased embarrassment.

"And while I have enjoyed myself all the winter going with you, Eli—"

"In expensive carriages to the Academy, etc," I suggested.

"Yes, while I have been happy to go there with you—I feel—I feel—oh, my dear Eli, I don't know how to say what I want to," and then the beautiful child hid her face in my bosom.

"Do not fear my answer, beautiful one," I said, soothingly. "What is it that weighs so upon your sorrowful heart?"

"Oh Eli, it is love," she said, sobbing wildly, and twisting her jewelled fingers in my amaran hair.

"Heaven be praised," I sighed as I felt the beating of her heart against my vest. "For whom is this love, darling?" I asked, for you know I am deeply interested in you."

"You will not be angry with me, Eli?"

"No, sweet one. I shall be only too happy," I said, wiping my tears from my eyes.

"Well, my dear—my long-cherished friend, I love—"

"Who, dear Sallie—who do you love?"

"Well, Eli, I love Charley Brown, to whom I am engaged," and then the scalding tears fell thick and fast on my aching bosom.

"Well, Sallie, what have you got to say to me?" I asked, hesitatingly, as I loosened her hands from my neck.

"Why, my dear Eli, Charley and father thought that I had better see you and propose—"

"Oh, darling one, I am thine!" I said, with great emotion. "Take me! Never mind father. Take me as I am. Take—"

"But, Eli, let me explain. They wanted me to see you and thank you for your many kindnesses, and propose that you don't come here any more!"

OUR CANADIAN VISITOR.—The Indian chief who has come from Lake Superior has attended a

meeting at Mr. T. Fowell Buxton's residence at Ware, on which occasion a considerable sum was raised on behalf of his mission. When he was introduced to the Prince of Wales a few days since the prince remembered having met him during his visit to Canada ten years ago, and, in fact, the chief wears on his breast the medal which his Royal Highness presented to him.

DREADFUL STORY OF A DIAMOND RING.—Among the victims of a recent railroad smash-up at Metuchen, N.J., was a Danish couple named Potassen, but two months married, Mr. Potassen being the son of a Danish nobleman. They were on their bridal tour, and were en route to San Francisco, where Potassen's brother is Danish Consul. When the terrible crash came all was darkness and confusion for a few moments; but the gentleman soon recovered consciousness, and his first thought was of his bride. An immediate search was made for the lady, who was at last found beneath a heap of debris senseless and covered with blood. Upon raising her up her husband was horrified to find that one of her arms had been completely torn off. The unfortunate lady was removed to shelter, and the husband began the sickening task of seeking his wife's missing arm. He proclaimed that upon one of the fingers was a diamond wedding-ring, a jewel worth many hundred dollars, and instantly a general search began. Among the prowlers about the wreck was a train hand, who was observed to secrete something under his coat and walk away. He was soon over-hauled, and on perceiving that he had been detected he threw down his burden, which proved to be the lost arm. It was picked up by the husband, who removed the ring and caused the arm to be taken care of. The lady was taken to St. Barnabas Hospital in Newark, where she now lies in a fair way of recovery.

"ONWARD!"

PUSH off! push off! no longer hark
Unto the voice of fear;
The sea tho' rough, the night tho' dark,
No longer linger here.

Oh, wait not for the coming light,
But leave this barren shore,
See through the gloom the beacons bright
Of brave ones gone before—

Of men whose deeds like meteors gleam,
And prove their right to fame;
Then do not sit and idly dream,
But strive to do the same.

No longer wait—the wind may shift,
The howling tempest roar,
Hope's cable part, your boat may drift
On Desperation's shore.

The ragged rocks with jagged teeth
Reset the path with care;
But Fame extends the laurel wreath,
To gain it "do and dare."

W. W. W.

GEMS.

SINCERITY is the basis of every manly virtue. PEACE is the evening star of the soul, as virtue is its sun, and the two are never far apart.

CONVERSATION should be pleasant without sour-ridity, witty without affectation, free without indecency, learned without conceitedness, novel without falsehood.

IDLENESS is UNNATURAL.—There is not a man nor a thing now alive but has tools to work with. The basest of created animalcules, the spider itself, has a spinning jenny and a warping-mill and powerloom within its head; the stupidest of oysters has a Papin's digester, with a stone and lime-house to hold it in. How unnatural then is idleness!

HOUSEHOLD TREASURES.

JELLIED YEAL.—Take a knuckle of yeal, wash it nicely, put it in a pot with water enough to cover it, boil it slowly for two or three hours, then take out all the bones—be sure to pick out all the little ones—cut the meat into small pieces, put it back into the liquor, season to your taste with pepper, salt, and sage; let it stew away until pretty dry, turn it in an oblong dish, or one that will mould it well to out in slices. This is a relish for tea.

PUT IN YOUR JAM WHILE HOT.—It is said that ordinary jam—fruit and sugar which have been boiled together for some time—keeps better if the pots into which it is poured are tied up while hot. If the paper can act as a strainer, in the same way as cotton wool, it must be as people suppose. If one pot of jam be allowed to cool before it is tied down, little germs will fall upon it from the air, and they

will retain their vitality, because they fall upon a cool substance; they will be shut in by the paper, and will soon fall to work-decomposing the fruit. If another pot, perfectly similar, be filled with a boiling hot mixture, and immediately covered over, though, of course, some of the outside air must be shut in, any germs which are floating in it will be scalded, and in all probability destroyed, so that no decomposition can take place.

STATISTICS.

COLONIAL PRODUCE.—A Parliamentary return shows that in the year 1871 12,126,514 cwt. of unrefined sugar were imported into the United Kingdom from the following sources: 4,293,823 cwt. from the British West Indies, 474,604 cwt. from Mauritius, 340,566 cwt. from India, and 7,018,081 cwt. from foreign countries, 1,640,952 cwt. of refined sugar and sugar candy were also imported in the year, almost entirely from foreign countries. The total is 13,767,466 cwt., viz., 8,694,499 cwt. foreign, and 5,132,967 cwt. from British possessions. The total is less by 740,000 cwt. than in the preceding year, there being a very large decrease in the import of foreign sugar, especially from the Spanish West India Islands. The quantity of sugar retained for consumption in the United Kingdom in 1871 was 11,678,622 cwt., unrefined, and 1,488,268 cwt. refined sugar and sugar candy, making a total of 13,166,890 cwt., being 18,564 cwt. more than in the preceding year. The net revenue from duties on sugar in 1871 was but 3,093,022l., being 641,000l. less than in the preceding year; the reduction of duty took effect in the spring of the year 1870. The average declared value of sugar, exclusive of duty, was higher in 1871 than in 1870; the value of Muscovado being 24s. 8d. for British West India, 27s. 6d. for Mauritius, 20s. 5d. for British East India, and 27s. for Spanish West India. The import into the United Kingdom of the produce of British possessions above-mentioned shows in round advance from 6,497,581 gallons in 1870 to 7,090,885 gallons in 1871; cotton-wool, from 126,494,480 lb. in 1870 to 131,300,433 lb. in 1871; cotton-wool, from 348,782,656 lb. in 1870 to 432,979,340 lb. in 1871. The import of cotton-wool from India, including Ceylon, amounted to 341,467,723 lb. in 1870; and to 431,209,744 lb. in 1871.

MISCELLANEOUS.

A STATUE to the Emperor Paul I. of Russia has just been erected at Pavlovsk, on the Don.

THE Earl of Dudley has consented to the exhibition of the Countess of Dudley's diamonds and other jewels in the International Exhibition.

HIS Majesty has given permission for the Prince Imperial of France to join the Royal Military Academy at Woolwich.

THE Queen has conferred a baronetcy upon Sir John Rose, late Finance Minister of Canada, in recognition of his distinguished and eminent services during many years.

MRS. WALSH has again been declared the lady champion of croquet for another year; and Mr. Black has won the all-comers (gentlemen) championship. The meeting has now terminated.

ALL the powers have accepted an invitation from France to an International Congress on the metrical system for weights and measures, to be held in September.

THE Swansea magistrates recently imposed a fine of 10l., with costs, upon the captain of a dredging skiff, for dredging for oysters in the Swansea fishery during the "close" season.

THE city of Oxford, with its 35,000 inhabitants, can now boast of not having a single criminal in its prison—an unusual circumstance, which is marked by the hoisting of a white flag on the tower of the jail.

WOMEN work at bricklaying in Austria, and we are told that it is common to see them parrying hods of bricks and mortar up long ladders. This is what it will end in here if women persist in their demand for women's rights.

SOME handsome iron gates have been fired in Lincoln's Inn. They are erected by the Inns of Court Volunteers as a memorial to their late commanding officer, Colonel Brewster, a son of the former Lord Chancellor of Ireland.

THE betrothal of the Archduke Charles Louis, brother of the Emperor of Austria, with the Princess Maria Immaculate Louise, daughter of the late King Ferdinand II. of Naples, is announced.

THERE is at present inscribed on the rolls of the University of Pesth a blind young man who ranks among the most industrious of students. He speaks Hungarian, French, and German, all of which he has learned by the ear. It is further added that he has published anonymously several poems.

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NOTICES TO CORRESPONDENTS.

B. S.—The verses on "The Sea" and so forth are very good.
SAUCY PAT.—The announcement must be stated in more definite terms.

MISS H.—Thanks for the packet, to the contents of which we hope to give early consideration.

CARRIE.—You must give some notice about age, for without that the announcement is peculiarly indefinite.

SHORT AND SWEET.—The age is too young for the contemplated position.

G. S. H.—The lines about "The Nightingales" are very good. As to their originality, we do not pass any opinion.

J. H. T.—The letters A E I form a Greek word meaning "For ever." When engraved upon jewels they are supposed to represent the constancy of the donor.

FOOT BEATTY.—The only course open to you appears to be to insert a short, clearly worded advertisement in some daily newspaper of large circulation.

CAMELLIA B.—We are sorry to be unable to put our hand on the paper referred to, and can only remind you of our standing rule on the subject.

ESTHER L. B.—A good method of cleaning gold is to wash it in warm soda made from delicate soap, with ten or fifteen drops of sal volatile in it. Dry by placing in boxwood sawdust. This makes jewels very brilliant.

CORPORAL M.—Our present heaviest gun is the Woolwich "Infant," of 35 tons. Its cost is about 25,000l., and each round of Palliser shell fired from it costs about 11l., of which about 8l. 10s. is for powder alone.

M. L.—In the absence of a copy of your tale we of course can have nothing to say on the subject; perhaps you had better not send a copy, for our time for perusal will be engaged on a similar task for many weeks to come.

R. GOLDB.—Your queries savour very much of those inquiries which eager debutantes in some occupations make after things as unattainable as the discovery of the philosopher's stone. If you are serious the answer is simply nothing can be done in the circles propounded.

SARAH G.—We will endeavour to comply with your request when you send us the necessary statement. What you intended to say appears to have been omitted from your letter, or fell away from the envelope in which the letter was contained.

A RAS MAN (Tavistock).—The name and address are usually placed at the bottom of each bill; if you can't find them there ask the dealer who supplies you with this periodical to see what he can do by means of his London agent. To this end give as full particulars as you can.

H. W. D.—If not too late try the following mixture as an antidote to those worms which infest the young cabbages and cauliflowers:—1 part carbolic powder; 2 parts quinine; 20 parts fine superphosphate. Dust the plants once or twice a week when the dew is on the leaf.

C. H. J.—We do not know if any actual appointment of a female practitioner of medicine has yet been made in England; in a recent advertisement for a resident medical officer to the Birmingham Hospital for women it was however stated that "lady doctors" were eligible as candidates.

A CONSTANT READER (Monaghan).—The ladies in the case referred to having been previously perfect strangers to each other, merely require to observe the usages of polite society, that is, they will speak of the state of the weather, or some other such obvious or prominent topic, and nothing more.

ELLEN.—It is said that one-half of all the women who marry do so between the ages of twenty and twenty-five. We apprehend therefore, if a lady is in a position to choose her own lot, that somewhere about the above-mentioned period is the most suitable time for her to change her status in life.

AN ANXIOUS FATHER.—Weakness of intellect is a comparative term which has various shades of meaning. The old Roman law placed single women under the charge of curators "propter levitate animi." There is no English office of a similar description, nor any institution which will supply the place of a parent's careful training and sympathetic regard.

A BRIGHTON SUBSCRIBER.—You will probably be able to effect your object by adding a tablespoonful of gum water to a pint of starch prepared in the ordinary way. special attention being paid to cleanliness in the admixture of both substances. A flat-iron made an inch or two narrower than formerly and with a good point is the best description of iron to use; or if you ask at the iron-

monger's for a "box-iron" you will find that a useful implement for your purposes.

MISS H.—We are obliged by your offer, which is similar to very many we are in the habit of receiving, to all of which from the very nature of the case we are unable to give a reply satisfactory to the applicant. We are afraid that at present no opportunity is likely to occur which will enable us to place your application out of the usual category; it shall however be borne in mind.

JEM BLUNT.—1. The present building known as the Olympic Theatre is not the house in which the celebrated Madame Vestris performed. The old house was burned down on the 29th March, 1849, and the present edifice completed and reopened on boxing-night of the same year, when a pantomime was performed. 2. Shakespeare was an actor as well as an author; one of his best parts was said to be the Ghost in "Hamlet."

JAS. B. L.—South Kensington Museum was opened in 1857. Bethnal Green Museum was opened a few weeks ago. The confusion existing in your mind will probably disperse when you consider that it was neither of the above institutions that the Princess Louise opened. Her Royal Highness and the Marquis of Lorne opened the Hospital for Children at Hackney a few days after the Prince and Princess of Wales opened the Bethnal Green Museum.

JONES.—1. We cannot; it is as much nature's gift as the colour or the texture. When you wish to appear in a different guise to that which nature intended should mark your individuality you must have recourse to art, which in the instance you have put means the curling irons or curl papers. 2. The writing is what is called a schoolboy's hand. 3. The wages in the countries you refer to vary with the skill of the workman; for the trade named fifty shillings a week is a low wage. 4. No.

THE NIGHTINGALES.

What time in all the year is half so sweet
As June, when weary day begins to fall;
And, as it fades, some sweet, refreshing shower
Casts down its kindest blessings over all?

'Twas at this hour the sun had gone to rest,
But still a hallowed twilight lingered there,
Amidst the music of the dripping trees,
That dance in freshness to the perfumed air.

I stood beneath the lindens, and I heard
Twelve nightingales at once peal forth their song;
'Twas as the wild chaucos doth leap the crag
So did their glorious echoes bound along.

From copse to vale—far to the distant wood,
And dying on the horizon of sound,
When, from the very lindens o'er my head,
A gush of answering melody floats around.

At first it rippled out so gently sweet,
Like to the birth of some pure little stream,
Or like the fairy chime of silver bells
Heard in the innocence of childhood's dream.

Hark, how it changes to a clarion note,
Refulgent with the richness of its strain;
Now like the babble of a waterfall
Murm'ring to bending woods its sad refrain.

Then in wild ecstasy these little birds
From far and near lift up their ringing voice,
Tumultuous with their joy, they seem to say
"We thank our Father, and rejoice—re-
joice!"

G. S. H.

FAITHFUL FANNY, twenty-four, tall and domesticated, would like to marry a tall, dark, loving man; a tradesman's son preferred.

SARAH C., twenty, tall, dark, good figure, and accomplished. Respondent must be a good dancer; an officer in the Army preferred.

DORA H., eighteen, fair, auburn hair, and accomplished. Respondent must be handsome and about twenty-one.

LOWELL ONE, twenty, medium height, good looking, fair complexion, in the Royal Navy. Respondent must be pretty and accomplished.

CLARA, nineteen, medium height, fair, light gray eyes, loving and domesticated. Respondent must be tall, dark and able to keep a wife; mechanic preferred.

MARRIAGE B., twenty-two, pretty and accomplished; would like to marry a tall, dark gentleman, who is very loving, fond of home and willing to make a wife happy.

LOVING CHARLEY, seventeen, 5ft. 3in., tall, handsome, amiable. Respondent must be fair, loving, handsome, and about the same age and height.

SWEET WILLIAM wishes to marry a tall, dark young lady about twenty-five; he is good looking, tall and fair.

A TALL IRISHMAN, 6ft., fair, considered handsome, wishes to marry a young lady who is good looking; a brunette preferred.

ALORA, twenty-one, 5ft. 7in., dark, merchant's clerk. Respondent must be under twenty, pretty, intelligent and affectionate.

LIVELY KATE, nineteen, medium height, dark hair, blue eyes, rosy cheeks, pretty, loving and fond of singing. Respondent must be about twenty-one, fair, and be a respectable tradesman.

HATTY ARTHUR, twenty-one, 5ft. 6in., dark-brown eyes, fair, loving, and a tradesman's son. Respondent must not be over twenty, handsome, domesticated, and fond of the drama.

RICHARD M., twenty-four, tall, handsome, and a sergeant in one of the finest regiments in England, would like to marry a young lady, who must be pretty and very tall.

LIZZIE, twenty-six, handsome, brown hair, dark eyes, affectionate and good tempered, having a good home of her own, wishes to marry a gentleman about thirty, who is tall and dark; a good tradesman preferred.

P. L., twenty-four, dark, has a small income, spent most of his years in America, but now wishes to settle

in England. Respondent should be fair, and not more than twenty-one years of age.

ELLEN, twenty-four, tall, dark hair, fair complexion, good looking, domesticated and loving, would make a good wife. Respondent must be fair and able to keep a wife; a police sergeant preferred.

H. A. E., twenty-six, medium height, dark hair, loving, fond of home, able to cook a dinner, would make a good wife. Respondent must be tall and dark; an Irishman preferred.

M. A. T., twenty-four, very lively, good tempered, and filling a good situation. Respondent must be dark and manly looking with a loving heart, from twenty-six to thirty years of age.

NATHANIEL, twenty-nine, rather tall, handsome, fond of music, and in a good position. Respondent must be about twenty, pretty, accomplished, and have a little money.

S. D., twenty-one, medium height, light complexion, would like to marry a young lady who has a little money, and would not object to enter into a small business. "S. D." is industrious and saving, and would make a loving husband.

BEATRICE C., eighteen, medium height, dark hair and eyes, a loving disposition, and domesticated. Respondent must be twenty-two, tall, handsome, lovable, fond of home, and have a little money; a farmer preferred.

ANNIE and MARY. "Annie" is tall, dark, and musical; "Mary" is tall, fair, and accomplished; both will have an income on their wedding-day. Respondents must be tall, dark, not over twenty-eight years of age, and hold a respectable position.

LOVING MILLY, twenty-seven, medium height, dark complexion, pretty, loving and domesticated. Respondent should be an elderly gentleman who has retired from business, he must be affectionate, fond of home and good tempered.

LOVING SOPHIA, nineteen, tall, rather dark, pretty, domesticated, and of a loving disposition. Respondent should be tall, dark, fond of home, age not over twenty-six years, able to keep a wife comfortably; only those who are in earnest need reply.

O. E. D., twenty-seven, 5ft. 9in., a widower with one little boy, tall, has dark-brown hair and hazel eyes, is fond of home and music. Respondent must be about twenty-two, tall, with dark hair and eyes, one who can make her own clothes, fry her own fish, and make home happy and comfortable; a native of Wiltshire preferred.

COMMUNICATIONS RECEIVED:

CHARLES B. is responded to by—"Lizzie" 5ft., fair, laughing blue eyes, light-brown hair, pretty, but has no fortune, would certainly not object to go to France.

WILLIAM by—"Helena," twenty-eight, tall, has very brilliant black eyes.

E. Q. by—"H. G.," twenty-five, tall, fair, and a well-established city gentleman.

HUBERT by—"Valentina," twenty-one, medium height, amiable and genteel, a French lady.

LALLA ROOKE by—"Hondelip," twenty-one, 5ft. 7in., fair complexion and brown hair.

HARRIET by—"William M.," tall, dark, good looking, has a gentlemanly appearance, and is fond of home.

EDITH by—"Edstone," twenty-four, tall, steady and handsome; is chief clerk in a manufacturing firm.

DARK HAIR by—"Arthur B.," twenty-four, 5ft. 6in., handsome, dark-brown hair, blue eyes, affectionate disposition, comfortable income.

DAVID C. by—"Cissy H.," twenty-one, medium height, fair, with long golden curls, good singer and pianist, also domesticated.

WORKING BOB by—"S. L. B.," eighteen, tall, handsome, used to keeping house, and a carpenter's daughter.

L. M. by—"W. G. C.," twenty-four, a good musician, cheerful disposition, and in an excellent situation from which he derives a good income.

SAMUEL H. by—"Patty R.," she has the qualifications required, being fair, about twenty-seven years of age, is a good musician and domesticated.

ALFRED C. by—"Alda," nineteen, tall, fair hair, musical, has a small income which will be increased when she is of age.

NATHAN BN. by—"Mona H. H.," she is accomplished, pretty, fond of children, has an annuity of 35l. per annum.

EMILY R. by—"J. A.," twenty-seven, 5ft. 9in., a widower with one little boy, fair, dark hair, and whiskers, loving, fond of home and music, his native home is near Bath.

E. T. S. would like to hear from "Joseph," as she would suit him.

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